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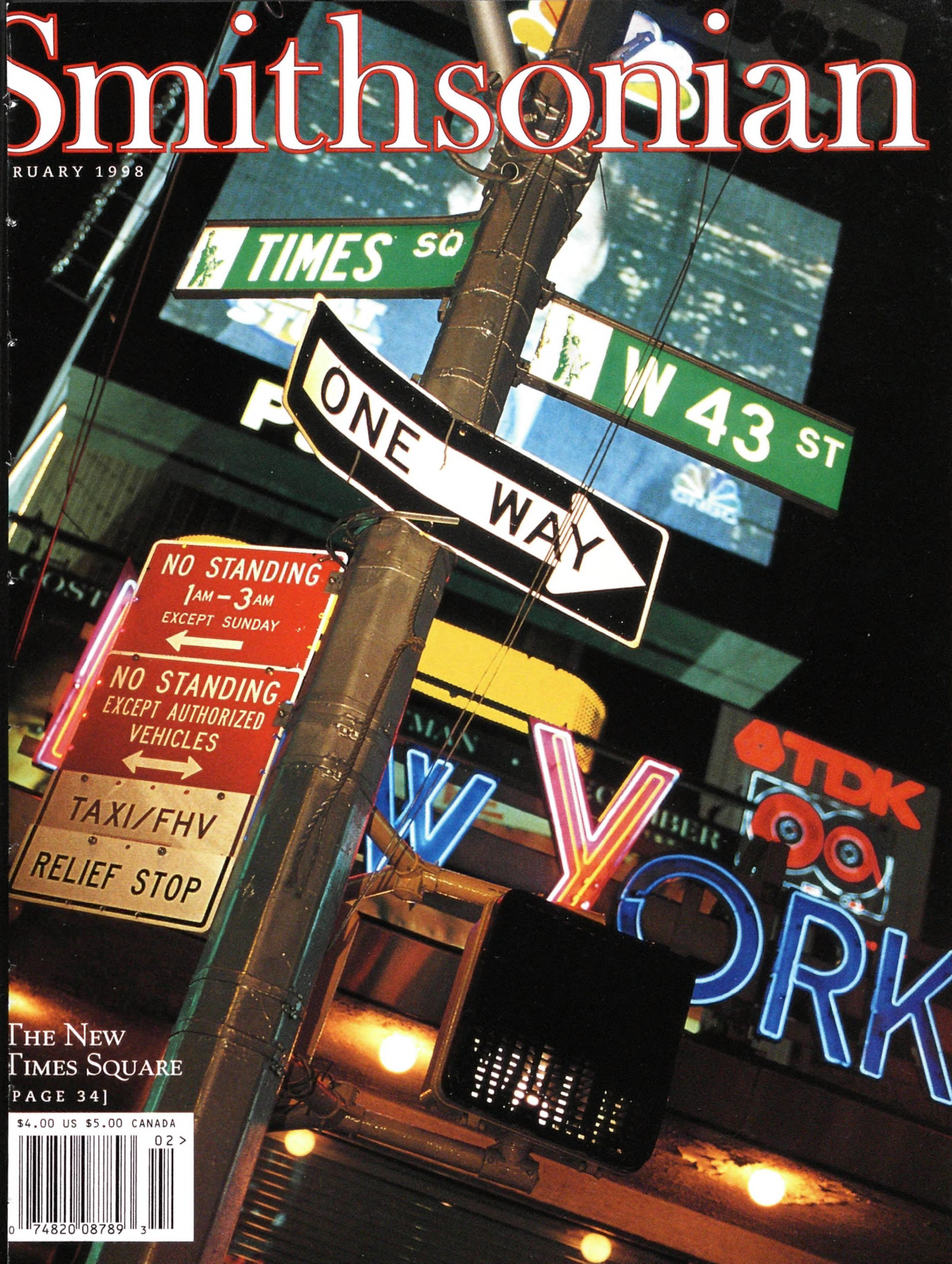

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[PAGE 34]

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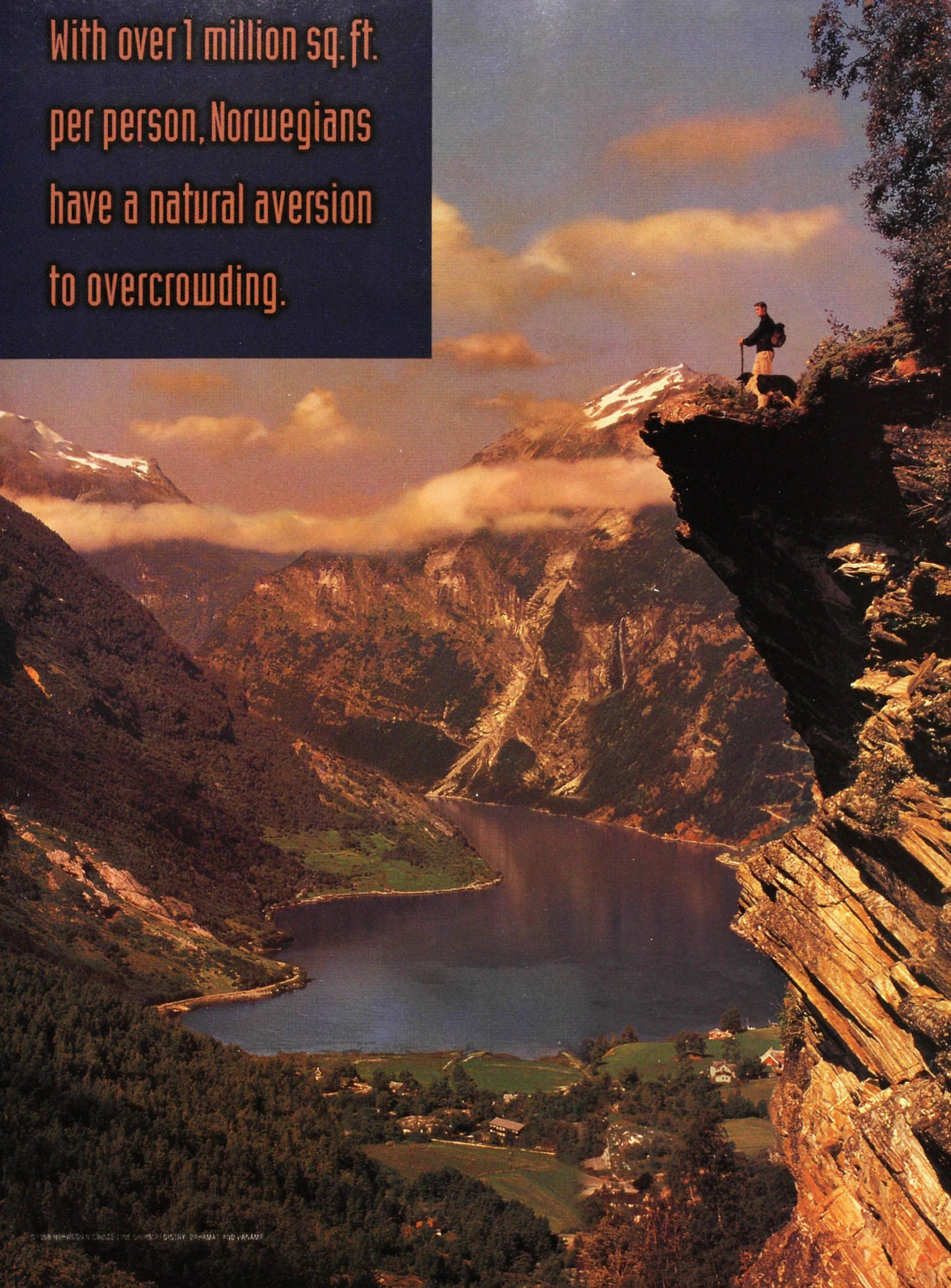

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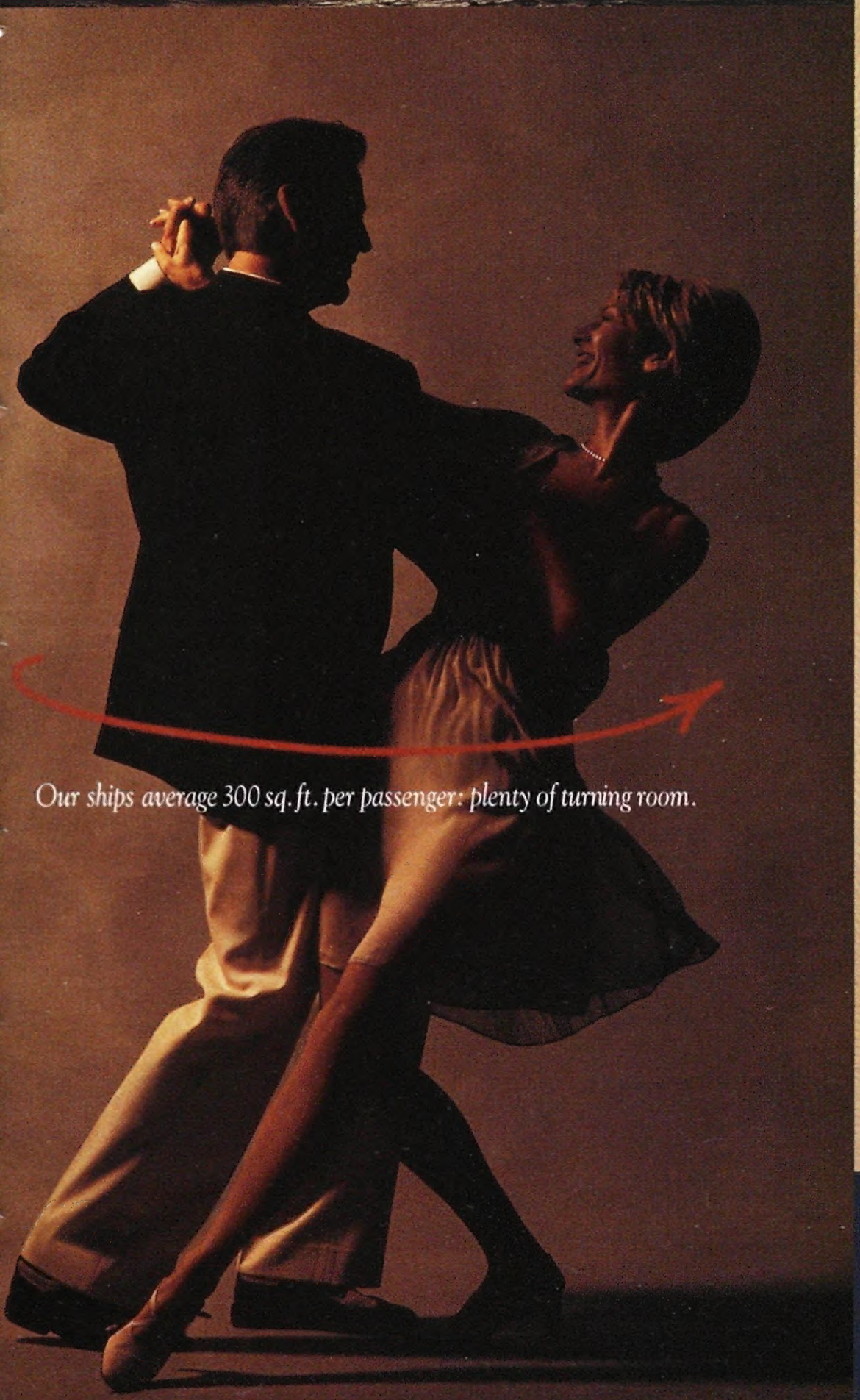

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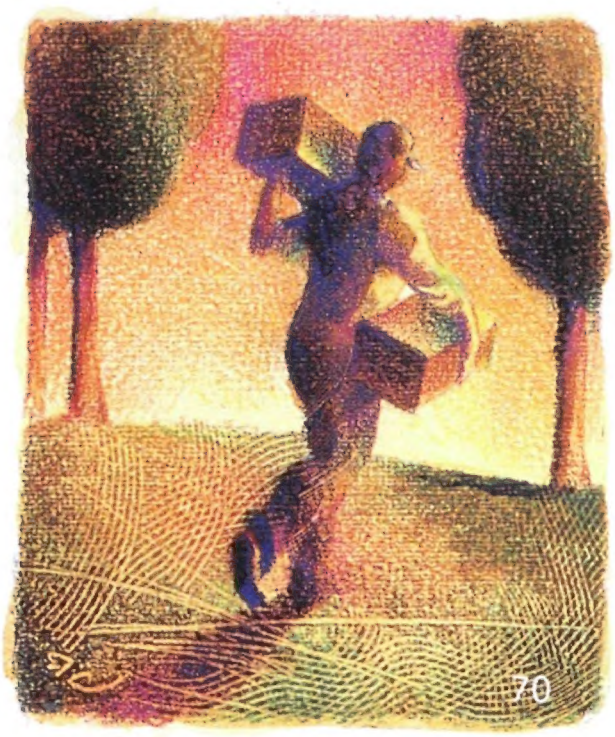


70

98

SMITHSONIAN

features

FEBRUARY 1998 ♜ VOLUME 28, NUMBER 11

34 Times Square Reborn
As bistros, hotels and eye-popping signs replace porn shops, the area is once again New York's place to see and be seen
BY DOUG STEWART

46 Remember the Maine
It was 1898 when the U.S. ship exploded in Havana, but the circumstances surrounding the tragedy are still making waves
BY TOM MILLER

60 The Joys of Rehabbing
For wildlife rehabilitators the greatest reward is getting injured or orphaned animals on their feet—and on their way
BY BIL GILBERT ♜ PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL BALLENBERG

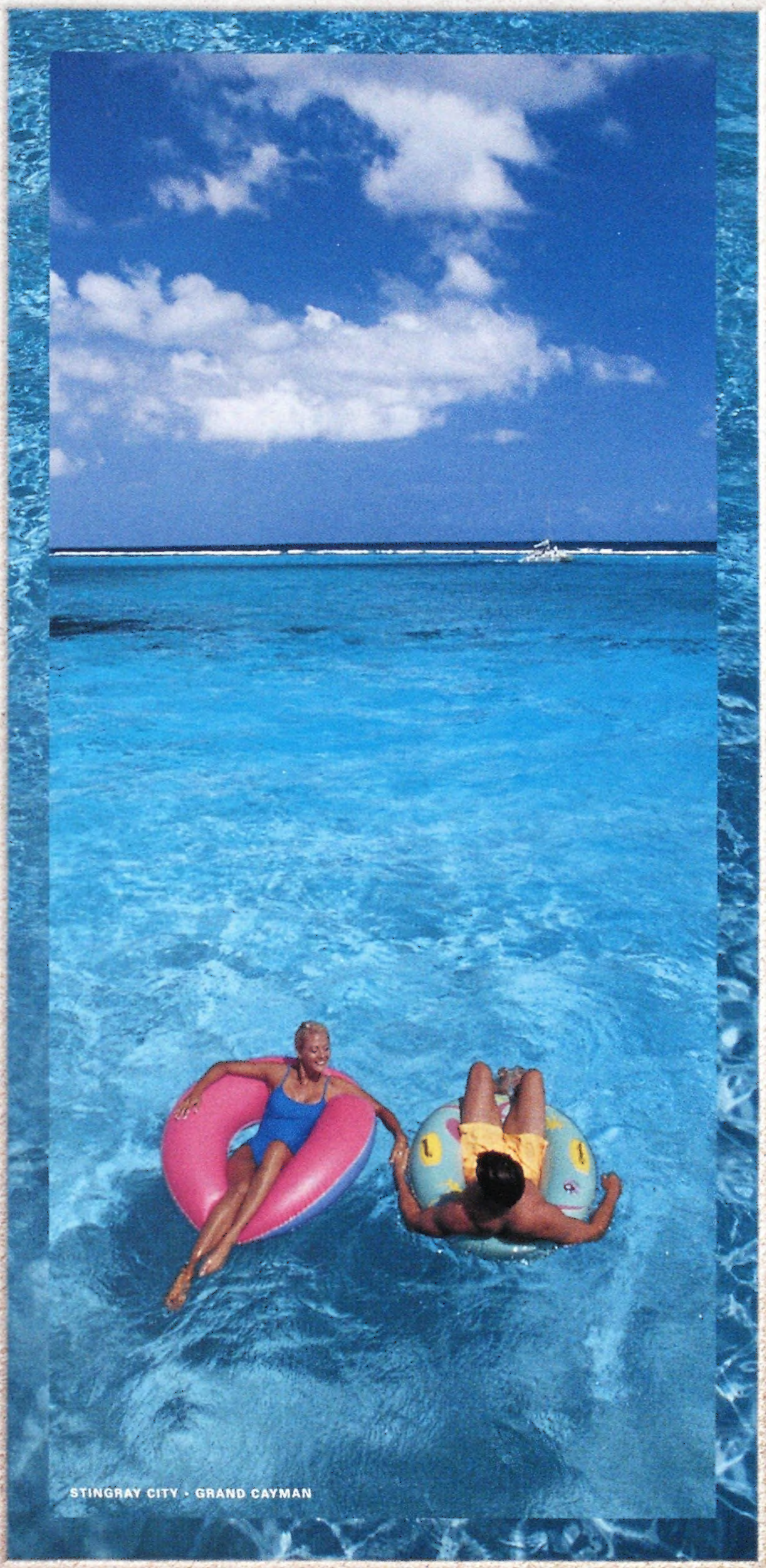
70 Boxes
Used for picking and packing—but not sitting!—simple wooden fruit boxes have become one farmer's prize possessions
BY STANLEY CRAWFORD ♜ ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAÚL COLÓN

76 Books, Books, Books, My Lord!
As the Reading Room at the heart of the British Museum ships its volumes to a new home, the nation's heart goes, too
BY ROBERT WERNICK

88 The Miracle of the Reef
Biologists believe that a remarkable one-night-a-year phenomenon may hold clues to restoring fragile coral structures
BY JOHN F. ROSS

98 The Beauty of Bare Bones
In wolf, turtle and whale, says artist Gendron Jensen, lies "a humbling geography that summons me to map its glories"

104 Jack London Followed his Muse into the Wild
His dream to "know what's beyond them hills" led him to the Yukon and to fame as our most popular adventure writer
BY BRUCE WATSON



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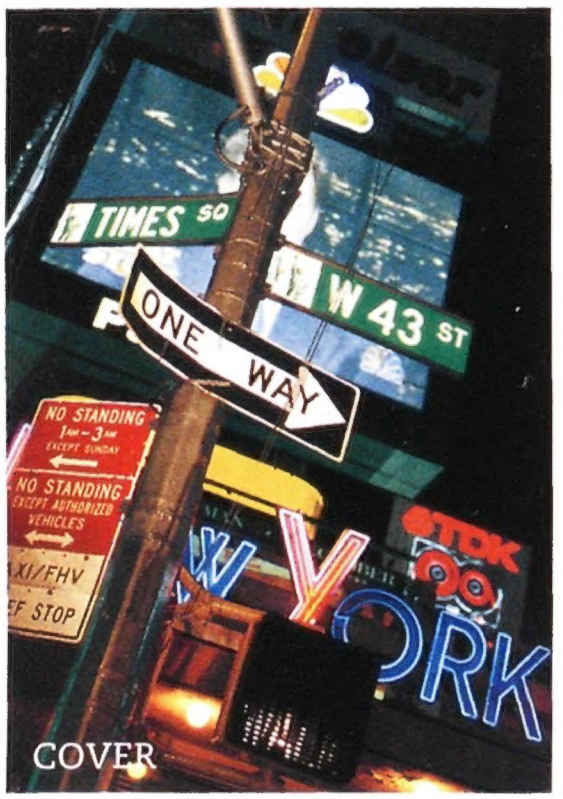


COVER

Cover In New York's Times Square, traffic signs compete with neon lights and the 26-by-34½-foot screen of the NBC/Panasonic Astrovision TV on the front of One Times Square. The mostly vacant building, where the ball drops on New Year's Eve, may be the most valuable and expensive signpost in the world. The four signs on the front net $7.1 million yearly; the signs on the sides add $700,000.
PHOTOGRAPH BY ENRICO FERORELLI

14 Letters to the Editor

114 Additional Sources

12 Smithsonian Perspectives
Museum Networking
BY SECRETARY I. MICHAEL HEYMAN

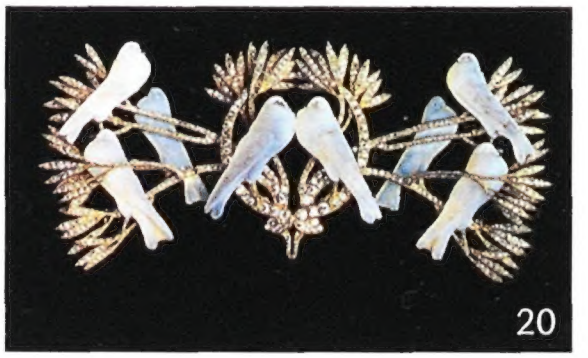
20 The Object at Hand
A Symbol That Failed
BY EDWARDS PARK

26 Around the Mall & Beyond
In Honor of Struggle
BY MICHAEL KERNAN

28 Smithsonian Highlights
The Artful Lens of Ansel Adams
Highlights Calendar starts on page 30

116 The Last Page
Reflections on Fame
BY GERALD DUMAS

28



20

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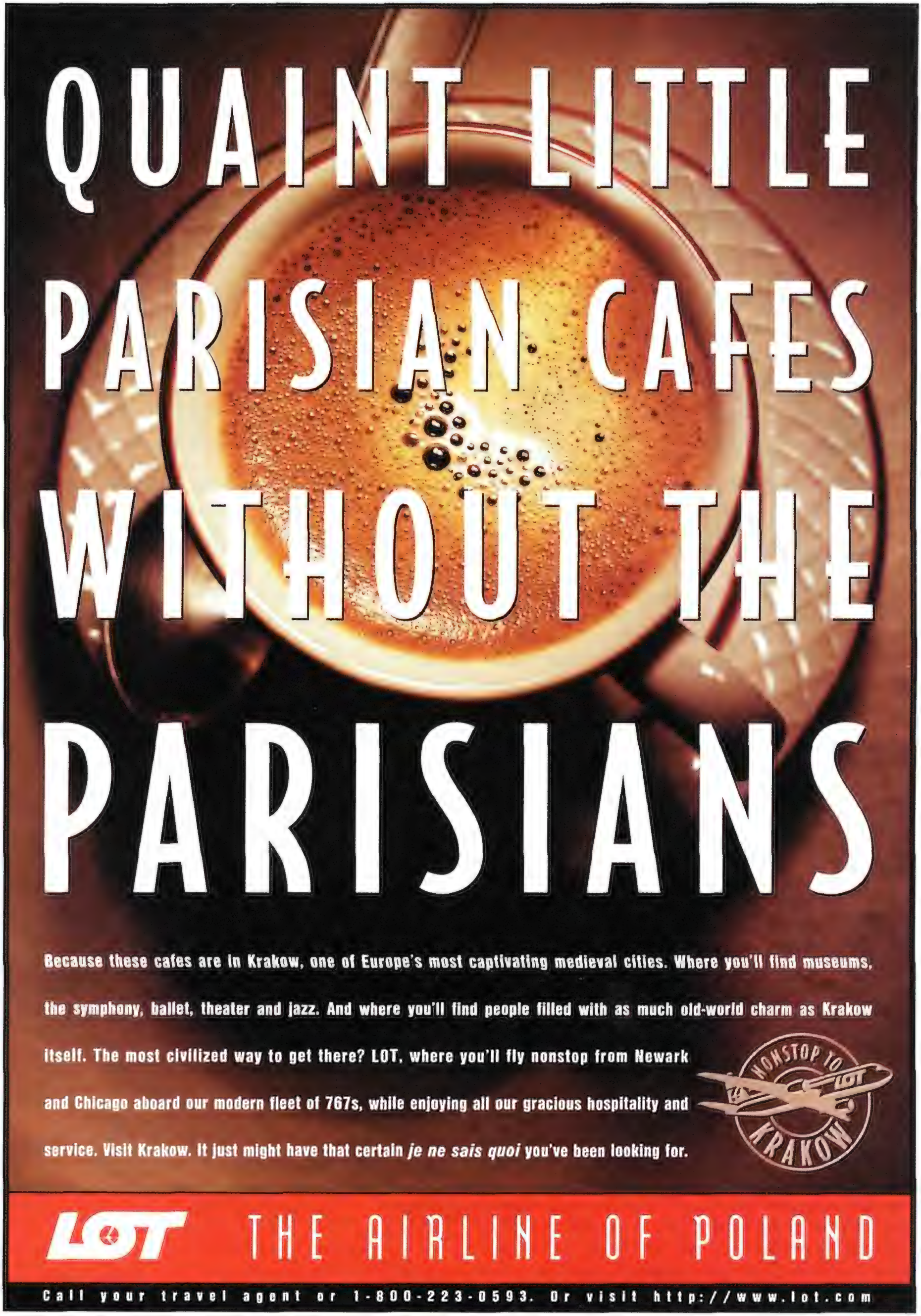
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SMITHSONIAN PERSPECTIVES

Museum Networking

WHETHER AT THE NOBEL PRIZE AWARDS OR AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW GETTY CENTER, THE SMITHSONIAN HAS A VITAL ROLE

THE NOBEL FOUNDATION, THE ORGANIZATION SET UP in 1900 by the bequest of Alfred Nobel to manage the assets that support the prestigious Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace (the prize in economics was established in 1968 by the Bank of Sweden), is planning an international museum that explores the impact of the contributions and discoveries of Nobel Prize winners. The museum will be located in Stockholm and available worldwide on the Internet. The foundation invited a group of museum officials to attend a seminar in conjunction with the 1997 Nobel Prize ceremonies to review the museum plans. I was delighted to be invited along with Arthur Molella of our National Museum of American History, which is planning a joint exhibition with the Deutsches museums in Bonn and in Munich, presently entitled "Nobel! One Hundred Years of the Prize." The Nobel Foundation is collaborating with the three museums for the exhibition that is scheduled to open in Washington, D.C., Bonn, and Munich in October 2000.

This joint effort will celebrate the global nature of the prize by providing an "international forum for the history of the Nobel Prize and will highlight the interconnectedness of the scientific, cultural, and humanitarian pursuits" that the Nobel Prize suggests. A core exhibition will focus on Alfred Nobel and the history of the awards. The main exhibitions will honor the achievements of Nobel laureates from the countries of the participating museums and will be linked electronically around the world.

Since the 1940s Americans have won a high percentage of the science awards. One need only follow media headlines to note how every country takes special pride in awards to its recipients. In Stockholm, however, the national identity of recipients is rarely noted. Our exhibition will have a similar focus, but the accomplishments of American winners will, of course, be evident. An eventual permanent exhibition, much smaller in scope, will continue to honor American Nobelists.

The Nobel events were splendid. My wife and I, grateful to the Nobel Foundation for funding our visit, attended lectures by the winners and enjoyed festivities. This all culminated in a formal awards ceremony. Much has been written about the ceremony. I have found nothing more moving than observations by W. B. Yeats, that famous Irish poet, when he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923.

"In the body of the Hall every seat is full, and all there are in evening dress, and in the front row are the King, Princess Ingeborg, wife of the King's brother Prince Wilhelm, [and] Princess Margaretha. . . . The President of the Swedish Academy speaks in English, and I see from the way he stands, from his self-possession, and from his rhythmical utterance, that he is an experienced orator. . . . The [American] Ambassador [accepting for a scientist unable to attend] goes towards the King, descends from the platform by some five or six steps, which end a yard from the King's feet, and having received the diploma and medal, ascends those five or six steps walking backward. . . . There is music, and a man of science repeats the movement, imitating the Ambassador exactly and easily, for he is young and agile. . . . Then more music and my turn comes. When the King has given me my diploma and medal and said, 'I thank you for coming yourself', and I have bowed my thanks, I glance for a moment at the face of the Princess Margaretha, and move backward towards the stair. . . . [Then] all is over, and I am able to examine my medal, its charming, decorative, academic design, French in manner, a work of the 'nineties. It shows a young man listening to a Muse, who stands young and beautiful with a great lyre in her hand, and I think as I examine it, 'I was good-looking once like that young man, but my unpractised verse was full of infirmity, my Muse old as it were; and now I am old and rheumatic, and nothing to look at, but my Muse is young.'"

The Nobel visit, which furthered the interrelations of the forthcoming Nobel Museum and the Smithsonian, was followed immediately by our attendance at the opening of the new Getty Center in Los Angeles. The new Getty is a colossal place—a 110-acre arts and cultural campus featuring a new museum and five other buildings devoted to research, education and conservation. I look forward to many hours there in the near future. As with the proposed Nobel Museum, meaningful cooperation between the Smithsonian and the Getty is useful especially in education programs, strategies and standards for digitization of collections, classification of artifacts, electronic networking, conservation, and research in the history of art and the humanities. Both institutions look forward to a deepening relationship that spans the coasts.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FERRARI

BRUCE WATSON GOT IT RIGHT IN HIS December 1997 article "This Is *Not* Your Father's Automobile" that enjoying a Ferrari starts at 85 mph. Normal use is uncomfortable and hard work. If you want great pectorals and deltoids but don't like pumping iron, try muscling a 308 Dino up four or five ramps in a parking garage a couple of times a day. (You'd let someone *else* park it?) A warning: If you are holding open the passenger-side door for someone wearing a short skirt, keep your eyes firmly fixed on the horizon. Otherwise, you might have to get married.

Joseph W. Goldzieher
San Antonio, Texas

I HAVE BEEN AN ART DIRECTOR FOR 25 years and I cannot recall a photograph that has impelled me to return to view it as many times as Enrico Ferorelli's shot of the 1957 Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa prototype. My December issue now falls open to the spread on pages 58 and 59.

Dennis Ritchey
Gibsonia, Pennsylvania

I BELIEVE MY RECENTLY COMPLETED oil painting, *The High Altar of the Church of the Holy Ferrari* (right), sums up what writer Bruce Watson expressed in his article. Featured on the center altar is a Ferrari Testarossa flanked by angels holding steering wheels. In the background is Saint Ferrari handing the "Golden Keys" to a new disciple. At the top center are two stereo speakers that provide the distinct sound of a running Ferrari which, combined with exhaust fumes emitted from two ports in the base of the altar, give those present the "Ferrari Experience" through sight, sound and smell.

Ward H. Nichols
North Wilkesboro, North Carolina

I WAS DRIVING MY 1948 PLYMOUTH Special Deluxe P15 home from work one summer afternoon in 1987 on a San Francisco freeway when I saw a small, very red speck of vehicle in my driver's side mirror. It grew larger and larger and quickly caught up with me. The car slowed and hung in the fast lane with its nose just to the side of my back fender while my four-door sedan and I trundled along. As it growled alongside me, I glanced down on the red roof as the car kept pace with me. The car then moved up so its rear was even with my front bumper. I looked again and recognized the *cavallino rampante*, the trademark of Ferrari. The gentleman driving it gave me a "thumbs-up" before speeding away. I was thrilled that someone from the other end of the "automobile love" spectrum could appreciate my dear old sedan. But then, isn't that just what a Ferrari owner would do?

Brenda S. Paupst
San Jose, California

BOSQUE REDONDO

WE WERE DOUBLY DELIGHTED BY your articles on two major Museum of New Mexico ventures. The planned Bosque Redondo Memorial that will commemorate a tragic chapter in Southwestern history is a project of the Museum of New Mexico's State Monuments Division, which also initiated the design competition that David Roberts mentioned.

The exhibition "Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap" originated at the Museum of New Mexico's Museum of International Folk Art. It was the unanimous choice of the American Association of Museum Curators Committee for curatorial and exhibit design excellence in 1996.

Thomas A. Livesay, Director
Museum of New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico

ACCORDING TO YOUR ARTICLE, FAmous scout Kit Carson "had little stomach for the roundup" of the Navajo and was "sympathetic to the Indians' plight." Yet under Carson's benevolent command, one quarter of the Navajo died from starvation, disease, or gunshot wounds inflicted by his troops. Young Indian girls were raped. The Mescalero Apaches who were not slaughtered were driven into Mexico. Just think what Carson

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might have accomplished had he been unsympathetic.

James E. Patterson
Crestline, California

HANDS-ON TOYS

PAUL TRACHTMAN DID AN EXCELLENT job describing the hands-on toys in the "Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap" exhibition at the Museum of International Folk Art. Where will the show next be traveling?

Dale Rogers
Austin, Texas

The show opens at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art on February 14, 1998, and will go from Indiana to California's Palm Springs Desert Museum; the Morris Museum in Morristown, New Jersey; and the Fowler Museum of Cultural History at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ed.

BELLED VIPER

THANK YOU FOR SCOTT WEIDENsaul's article about the endangered belled viper and for the photographs by David W. Harp and Carl A. Hess. Shortly after World War II, we acquired a piece of property in the woods of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. The survey for the deed was done in the very early 1900s, and we were surprised to find that the locator for one corner of our land was "a den of rattlesnakes." We asked why this might be and were told that such a den was far more permanent than a tree or a fence post—or even a rock.

Although we saw many pit vipers on our land and in our outbuildings, none ever gave us any trouble—and they ate the rats and mice.

Jean P. Harshbarger
Martinsburg, Pennsylvania

BERNARR MACFADDEN

IN 1937 I WON FIRST PLACE IN THE "midget division" (children under 12) at the New York State archery tournament and was invited to present archery demonstrations at Bernarr Macfadden's health camp in Dansville, New York. That summer I learned a more detailed explanation of the benefit of hair pulling that Joseph F. Wilkinson described in his article. The purpose was to "lift" the scalp from its cranial resting place to give the area between the skull and the scalp room to "breathe."

Thirty years later at a hair salon in New Delhi's Oberoi Hotel, the shampoo person vigorously seized my hair in both hands, explaining that the scalp must be "lifted" before ablutions could begin. I wondered whether Macfadden learned the technique from Indians or they from him.

Molly Ramshaw
Hamilton, New York

J. PAUL GETTY CENTER

OF ALL THE ARTICLES IN THE DECEMber issue, I have lingered longest over Chad Slattery's lovely pictures in Stanley Meisler's article on the new J. Paul Getty Center in Santa Monica.

Charlotte Cardon
Tucson, Arizona

WITH VAST TRACTS OF LOS ANGELES already lost to development, why did the Getty Trust pierce the heart of one of the few remaining unspoiled areas in a city of 15 million people? There are those of us who are foolish enough to believe that nature is itself a work of art that needs no crown of adornment.

Charles Krich
Willimantic, Connecticut

THE OBJECT AT HAND

I AM AMAZED AT THE AMOUNT OF research that must have gone into Adele Conover's history of the game of lacrosse. Saturday nights at the Armory on Main Street in Rochester, New York, belonged to the Iroquois who brought excitement to our town with their lacrosse team. This started in the 1930s but was interrupted by World War II.

The Iroquois were excellent athletes who excelled in other sports as well. The big name in local lacrosse circles was Young Deer. I well remember a lithe, handsome young lacrosse player named Jay Silverheels who later played "Tonto" in the television series *The Lone Ranger*.

Andrew J. Ciulla
Glendale, Arizona

WOMEN'S LACROSSE HAS LONG BEEN a scholastic sport, and many all-Americans have played on U.S. traveling international teams. I have played "ladies' rules," and it is somewhat more difficult, requiring a nearly ballet-like grace and nimbleness, with virtually no contact, that we old-time rock 'em, sock 'em guys would find hard to master. Women's lacrosse is the purest representation of how the game should be played.

In my opinion, former Syracuse University and National Football League great Jim Brown was the best lacrosse player ever to step onto a field. As a midfielder he was predominant, but he had a Syracuse teammate who probably was equally as good but was unheralded because of the position he played: four-time all-American goalie Oren Lyons. He is a full-blooded Native American who is the Faith Keeper and Chief of the Turtle Clan of the Onandaga Nation, and he comes from a long line of men who play, promote and teach lacrosse.

Charles Starr
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

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AT HAND

A Symbol That Failed

IN 1918, A HOPEFUL FRANCE GAVE MRS. WILSON A PEACE BROOCH, BUT PEACE ELUDED HER HUSBAND AND THE WORLD

BY EDWARDS PARK

IT'S BIG FOR A BROOCH, ABOUT six inches across and maybe two and a half high. But because it's partly transparent, and cleverly hinged to fit the curves of a lady's body, it does not seem clunky. Tiny diamonds etch its design—olive branches with leaves—and, perched symmetrically upon them, eight doves. Altogether, it's fairly typical of the work of the famed French jewelry and glass designer, René Lalique.

Ordinarily you find this brooch at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. But lately it has been at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, in New York, in an exhibition of Lalique's fin de siècle jewelry, glass designs and drawings.

Lalique created the olive branch brooch around 1906, and back then the birds were described as pigeons. Its story grows dim for a decade, in fact until December 1918, a month after the original Armistice Day ending the Great War. The "pigeons" suddenly turned into doves of peace, the olive branches took on full significance and the design became the perfect symbolic gift from the citizens of Paris to Edith Bolling Wilson, wife of President Woodrow Wilson.

Catastrophic World War I was declared a "war to end wars." America had intervened to end the fighting. Now here Wilson was in Europe, conducting talks everyone hoped would prevent the outbreak of another. The impact of the President's visit is hard to imagine today. World War I, the Great War of 1914-1918, has faded into history, and Wilson's high-minded hopes for permanent peace now seem simpleminded or ironic.

Edith Wilson wore the brooch, sporting eight peace doves, in this 1920 portrait.

In the France of December 1918, the savage destruction of four years still lay heavy on the land and in the hearts of Europeans. Villages lay in rubble, forests had been hewed by storms of shrapnel, hills leveled and meadows cratered by high explosives.

Politicians hadn't been able to stop the insanity. Generals could only suggest sending more troops slithering through the mud to die in further attacks. It was only when, at last, Woodrow Wilson poured in American troops and later offered his idealistic Fourteen Points for restructuring Europe that Germany, starving and rebellious, surrendered.

Four weeks after the armistice, the Wilsons arrived in Brest aboard an impounded prewar German liner named *George Washington* (to make American tourists feel comfortable). France went wild. Guns roared in salute; bands crashed out "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "La Marseillaise," great crowds jammed the streets of Paris, shouting "Vive Veelson!" The lanky, professorial pince-nez-wearing President was all but sainted as a war-ender and forger of a new and better world. And everyone loved pretty, dark-haired Edith Wilson, his new wife, tall, and what is best described as "shapely," with a ready smile and easy charm.

Edith Bolling Galt Wilson—undeniably "F.F.V." (First Families of Virginia) with roots going back to John Rolfe and the Indian princess Pocahontas—met and married the President in 1915. He was a lonely widower and she a widow. She gave him the companionship and loving support that he craved. Their voyage to France at the end of the war would have seemed like a second honeymoon except for the pressure Wilson felt to negotiate a just peace with all those tricky and vengeful European leaders. On December 16 at the Hotel de Ville (City Hall), the President was given a gold medal. Edith Wilson noted in her journal that ". . . to my surprise, the master of ceremonies then turned to me and presented a

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beautiful Lalique box containing a most unusual pin composed of six doves of peace. . . ."

Well, she counted wrong, but the entry indicates gratitude for this "pretty conceit." She went to Paris again in 1919, for the signing of the peace treaty. "I wore an unusual gown by Worth," she tells us, and "the great pin with the diamonds and doves of peace. . . ."

The Lalique brooch shows up in a portrait of her, done in 1920 by Seymour Stone. A dispute arose and the portrait never hung at the White House. Perhaps it also reminded her of a tragic time in her life and the life of the President. Wilson had collapsed during his 1919 "peace" tour of the nation, a demanding trip around the United States, undertaken, despite ill-health, to rouse public support for the peace treaty that he'd played such a large role in constructing, and especially for the League of Nations.

The treaty, based on his Fourteen Points, required a League of Nations, and the United States, he believed, must surely join the League to add to its peacekeeping credibility. But he found that the League, which sounded so sensible in war-torn Europe, rubbed a lot of Americans the wrong way, especially Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Everyone wanted the treaty, all right, but ties with Europe made people leery about one day having to pull European chestnuts out of the fire—again.

The President's splendid oratory won him admiration and affection, as he toured the country, but did not produce the flood of pro-League telegrams to Washington that he sought. Political opponents claimed he had forgotten the workings of a democracy. He didn't ask for support, he demanded it in the name of national virtue. Even his French colleague, Georges Clemenceau, found himself bored with Wilson's Fourteen Points: "Why," he exclaimed, "God Almighty has only ten!" And H. L. Mencken, ever watching for an open shot at big game, declared that Wilson was waiting for "the first vacancy in the Trinity."

An ill President Wilson gets some campaign support from his devoted wife.

The President drove himself cruelly in a losing cause. In Kansas, he collapsed and was rushed home. He seemed to get a little better, then took a fall and suffered a stroke. Thereafter he was unable to handle the work of the Presidency, and the normal running of the country slowed to a crawl. With only two years of formal schooling but devoted to keeping tedious chores away from her husband, Edith Wilson checked every letter, every request for a decision, even every bill to sign. It was claimed she signed some of them for her husband, but most she shelved without an answer. Newly arrived ambassadors weren't received, candidates for empty Cabinet posts were left twisting in the wind. Vice President Thomas Marshall, famous mostly for remarking that "what this country needs is a really good five-cent cigar," slumped into a fit of depression when someone suggested that he might have to take over the reins. "Presidentess" Edith had firm hold of them.

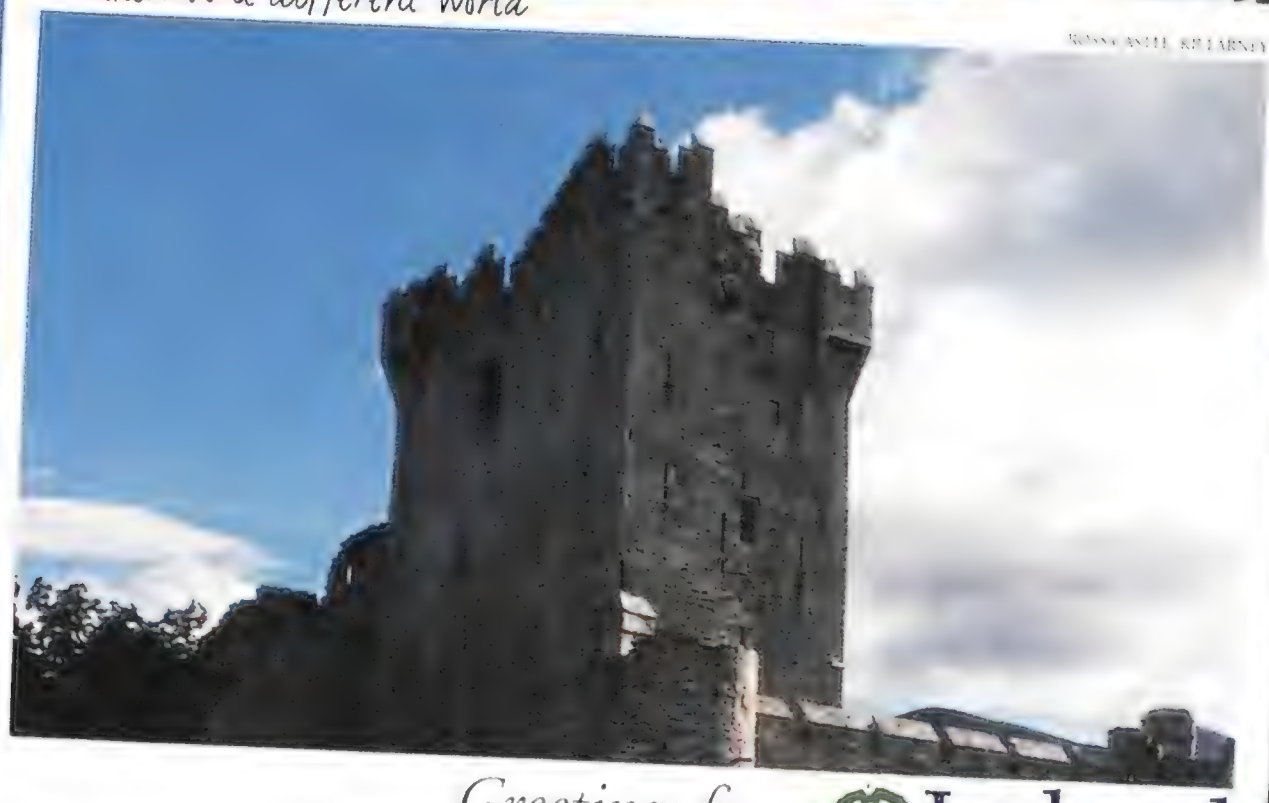
Rumors flew that the President was mad—and indeed the meager communications from the White House often made little sense. Letters to the President from members of the Cabinet would be answered in "a large, school-girlish handwriting" that meandered all over the page. Mistrust of the highest office—almost unheard of in those innocent days—appeared and grew, and anger focused on the only people who had access to the President: his doctor, Cary Grayson, his long-trusted secretary, Joseph P. Tumulty, and finally the second Mrs. Wilson. The *Baltimore Sun* wrote of congressional suspicions that the idleness of the White House must be blamed on "the dark and mysterious Mr. Tumulty, or, more sinister still, must we look for the woman in the case?"

President Wilson never recovered. Congress adopted the treaty but rejected U.S. entry into the League of Nations. As the election of 1920 approached, the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President, James Cox of Ohio and a chap named Franklin Delano Roosevelt, called on the sick old man. Joining the League would be part of his platform, Cox promised. That finished him. The Republicans' "available man," Warren Harding, won handily; the League was forgotten for good. So, it seemed, was Wilson. Beaten and shattered, he clung to life till a bleak February morning in 1924. Then the country suddenly remembered, and crowds knelt in the street outside the house in Washington.

Edith Wilson lived on, dedicating herself to fiercely safeguarding the memory of her husband. No one knows what the League of Nations might have done if the United States had joined, but without us the League of Nations proved spectacularly fruitless in maintaining peace. After World War II mankind created its strange stepson, the United Nations. Edith Wilson lived to see it all.

In 1961, as a "little old lady" in her late 80s—and just a few months before her death—she sat beside President John F. Kennedy as he signed a bill authorizing a memorial to Woodrow Wilson. He gave her the pen. She took it gratefully. "I didn't dare ask for it," she smiled. They both knew that was a fib.

Awaken to a different world



Greetings from Ireland

In a pub the night before, a local storyteller filled us with tales of brave deeds and romance that had happened hundreds of years before at a castle by the lake. We were so enchanted, we had to see it for ourselves. Imagine our delight when we found out there were castles just like it where you could stay the night.

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In Honor of Struggle

LIFE CAME HARD FOR PEOPLE LIKE HISTORIAN LONNIE BUNCH'S ANCESTORS; HE STRIVES TO COMMEMORATE THEM

BY MICHAEL KERNAN

HISTORY CURATORS, BY THE NATURE OF THEIR WORK, spend most of their time poring over books and papers. But sometimes they venture into "the field," and sometimes the field is literally that.

Lonnie Bunch, the engaging associate director for curatorial affairs at the National Museum of American History (NMAH), wanted a slave cabin to be put up on the museum floor. And he knew just the one, in a nature preserve near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

"Well, I went down there, dressed like a good academic curator, tweed jacket, slacks, loafers, and the park ranger woman says, 'OK, we've got to go back in the swamp.' I said, 'Wait a minute.' This was right after Hurricane Hugo, you understand."

I nodded. I could see Bunch, age 45, a serious scholar, graduate of Howard and American universities, briefly a college teacher and then a historian at the National Air and Space Museum and one of the creators of the Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles—I could see him hesitating there in his collar and tie, muttering, "Wait a minute here, I'm a historian, I do research in the Library of Congress . . ."

But he followed the ranger into the woods ("What's that shaking in the bush?" "Oh that's just a wild boar, pay no 'tention") until, an hour later, they came to the cabin. There they met old Mr. Johnson, who had lived in the cabin with his grandmother, a former slave. Mr. Johnson led them all around the place. But he refused to set foot on the far side of the property. "I thought maybe there was some spirit or something and asked him why he wouldn't go there," Bunch recalls. "He said, oh no, it was no spirit, it was the rattlesnakes. I jumped two feet.

"At the last minute they decided to keep the cabin there. It was all right. We will build a cabin facade of our own that people can walk into. We'll put mannequins of children inside, so you can see how the little children lived while their parents were out in the fields."

Bunch searched the Library of Congress slave narratives for material that will tell their stories on tape when the cabin, part of "Communities in a Changing Nation: The Promise of 19th-Century America," opens in the fall. One of his favorite photographs (above) has been blown up to life-size to form the signature of the exhibition's section about slavery.

This picture of a former slave, c. 1890, a favorite of Bunch's, will be prominent in a new exhibition on 19th-century America.

"The story of the *Amistad* [SMITHSONIAN, December 1997] has helped to increase understanding of slavery. My focus in this show is to let slaves speak for themselves," observed Bunch. "I've learned some things myself while working on it. I looked up my family in Raleigh, North Carolina, and I found account books showing payments to my relatives who were sharecroppers, like $1.20 for picking 200 pounds of cotton, back in 1880."

Going through old files, Bunch tracked his ancestors to about 1800, when one of them, a slave, apparently took the plantation owner's name. "What I took from this was a new appreciation of slavery: people's ability to survive; the way they kept families together despite all efforts to split them up. What I want to have here is not just a macro

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CRYSTAL CRUISES

sense of what slavery was like but a specific sense of individuals. I would give anything to make sure the old woman in that picture is not forgotten."

When Bunch came to NMAH, nine years ago, the new exhibition was already in the works. How it got from there to here is quite a story. "For one thing, I went to Japan often in the middle of it." What he means is that for three years he headed the huge "Smithsonian's America" show in Tokyo. "We tried hard to learn Japanese," he said casually.

Originally, the new exhibition was to open with a huge atrium, great sweeping photographic murals of prairies, mountains, cities, sprawling factories. A panorama of pop culture at the entrance was to get people in the mood with icons like Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone.

"It was about a notion of infinite land, of abundance, of what America was then. We really wanted to tell it that way. But it didn't work. We thought the audiences would love it, but we found it was too hard to shift from that fantasy to what the 19th century was really like. Now we start right out with the real history."

Money for the exhibition was hard to come by: for months Bunch courted a major bank, sketched designs, flew West to make presentations, only to get a final no. He tried a big candy manufacturer, too, and took home a lot of chocolate but no money. In the end, it was the whopping financial success of the show in Japan that made the difference.

The exhibition will open with three case studies. "One is about the Jewish community in Cincinnati," Bunch remarked, and I gaped. I had vaguely thought that the great concentration of Jewish immigrants had stayed in New York.

Among Bunch's credits is "Smithsonian's America," the smash show in Japan.

"Oh no," Bunch assured me. "In the 19th century one of the most important populations of Jews in America was in Cincinnati. Part of it was standard chain migration, part was the jobs. And some religious leaders like Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise made it

a center of Reform Judaism. The 1866 Plum Street Temple is one of the prides of 19th-century America."

Dramatizing this case study is a Jewish peddler's cart packed with those odds and ends that used to be called notions. Tapes will describe the struggles of immigrants who wandered along often-hostile streets and country roads selling gewgaws for pennies, even on the Sabbath.

"Not all Jews were peddlers, of course, but this is a way of telling something about how some of the people in this country lived in this country at that time. Think of the hard choices, the compromises: To work on the Sabbath or not? To go out into a strange new land where you don't know how you'll be treated, and leave your family behind?"

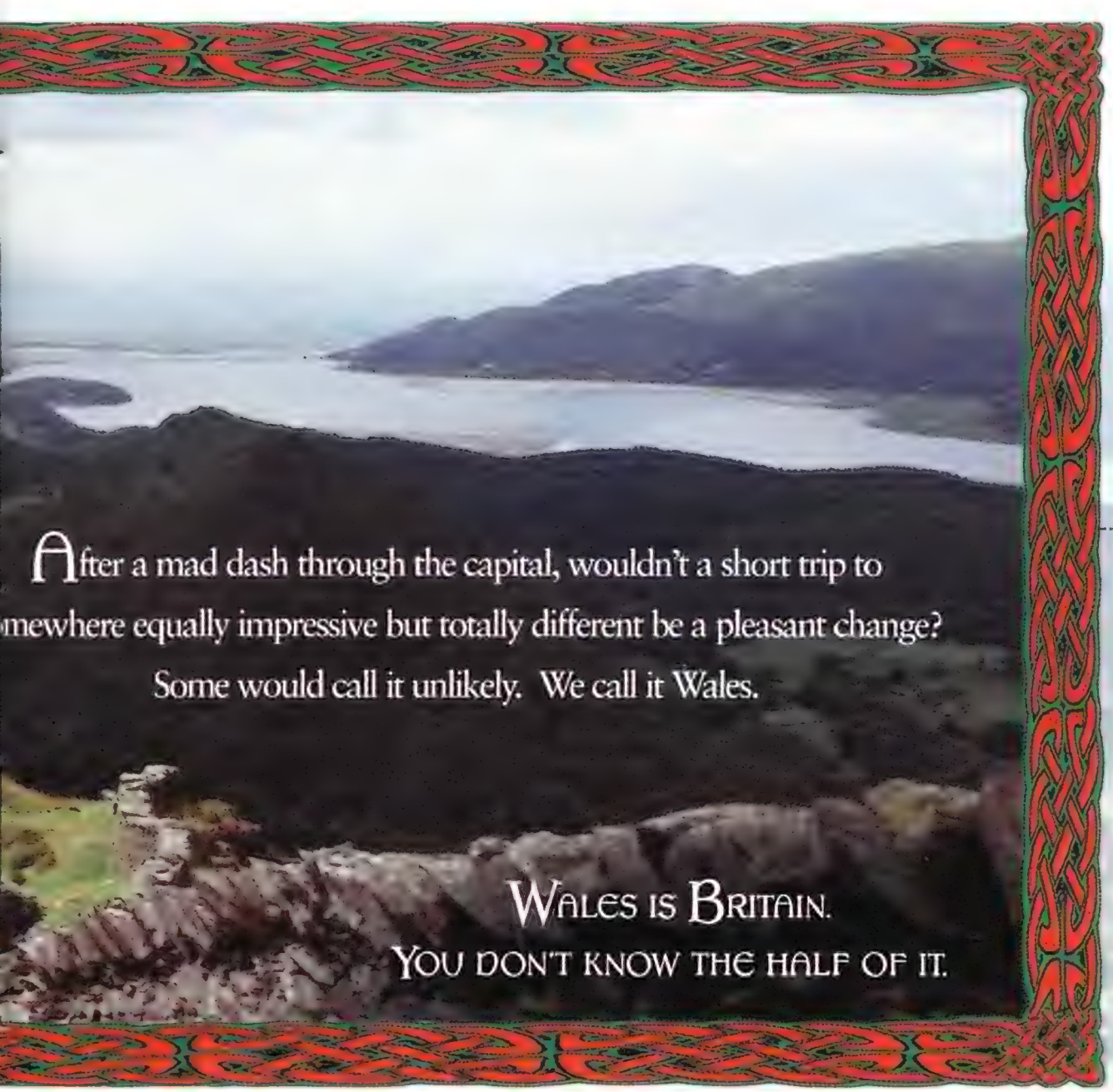
Another case study is centered on a sewing machine factory in Bridgeport, Connecticut. "We tell about the layers of labor, from the women needle polishers to the skilled machinists. We follow the lives of some people, including one who moved up from skilled labor to middle management."

In those days, if you got hurt or fired, you were out of luck. There was no government safety net, and the unions—"the people who brought you the weekend"—were still coming up. "The reason those factories all had these fancy gates, beautiful wrought-iron things, was to keep the workers inside. So they wouldn't slip off early," Bunch added.

Bunch exudes energy, and it occurred to me: this was the same drive that he brought to his Japan project. Some Japanese could not imagine a black man running the whole show; Bunch had to conquer his own doubts as well as theirs. He did it with the help of his grandfather.

"My grandfather was a sharecropper who put himself through college by age 30, got a dental degree at Howard—this was before World War I—and pushed tourists around Atlantic City in little jitneys in order to get the money to open a practice. When he finally did, with my grandmother helping by doing laundry for the hotels, he was told that New Jersey didn't honor Howard degrees. "So he went to graduate school all over again at the University of Chicago. That took several more years. And then he opened his practice.

"And I was sitting in the conference room there in Tokyo, discussing the number of shipping crates we'd need, and their weight, and the G forces they could take in flight, and suddenly I thought: if my grandfather could see me now. It seemed he was there in the room, shaking his head ever so slightly in disbelief and smiling his approval."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The Artful Lens of Ansel Adams

SMITHSONIAN HIGHLIGHTS

IN 1980, THE CELEBRATED PHOTOGRAPHER Ansel Adams received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The accompanying citation read: "At one with the power of the American landscape, and renowned for the patient skill and timeless beauty of his work, photographer Ansel Adams has been visionary in his efforts to preserve this country's wild and scenic areas, both on film and on earth."

A riveting exhibition of 115 of Adams' most memorable and surprising images is now at the National Museum of American Art. On view through March 29, "Ansel Adams, A Legacy: Masterworks from The Friends of Photography Collection" features a broad cross section of images from the artist's prolific 40-year career. Here we find landscapes from his travels through the Southwest, views of San Francisco, pictures of national parks, a variety of portraits, and intimate close-ups of nature, including *Dogwood, Yosemite National Park, California* (top, right) and *Leaf, Glacier Bay National Monument, Alaska* (bottom, right). Here, too, are such hallmark vistas as *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, 1941, and lesser-known works such as *Trees in Snow*, 1932 (above, left). The show leaves no doubt as to why Adams is one of the most admired artists of this century. "Like the granite face of Half Dome in his beloved Yosemite National Park," says exhibition curator Andy Grundberg, "Ansel Adams has achieved the status of an enduring monument in the public imagination." —*Diane M. Bolz*

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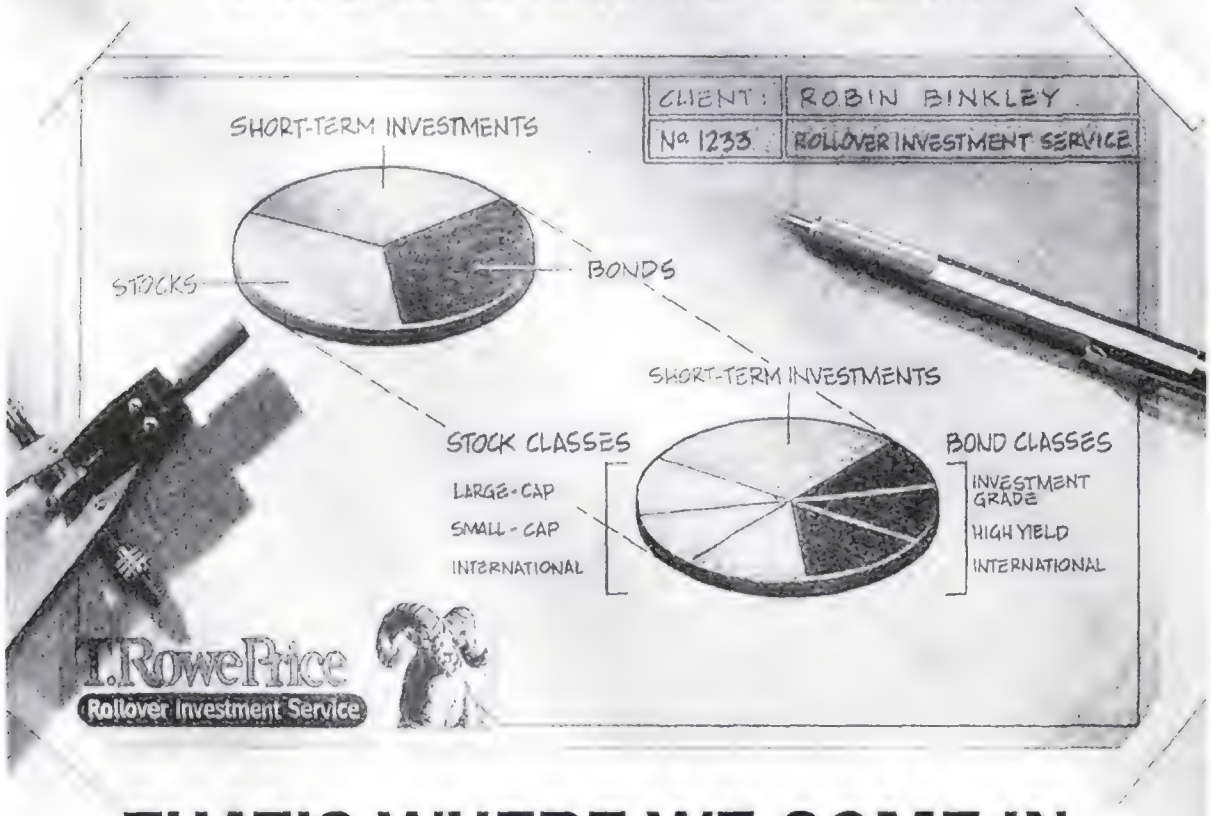

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The Smithsonian home page on the World Wide Web (www.si.edu) offers on-line information about exhibitions, collections, events and products.

Special February Exhibitions, Events

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Ansel Adams, A Legacy: Masterworks from the Friends of Photography Collection (through March 29) Images by the renowned American photographer (1902-1984) illustrate his point of view as an artist and as an advocate of national environmental stances. See page 28.

RENWICK GALLERY

Reinstallation of the Permanent Collection Thematic reinstallation showcases works in a variety of craft media.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

George C. Marshall: Soldier of Peace (through July 12) Exhibition of paintings, photographs and memorabilia salutes the life and career of American statesman Gen. George C. Marshall.

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM & SCULPTURE GARDEN

George Segal, A Retrospective: Sculptures, Paintings, Drawings (February 19-May 17) Show includes key examples of the famed sculptor's signature white-plaster figurative tableaux.

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

Star Wars: The Magic of Myth (through November 1) Exhibition commemorating the 20th anniversary of the *Star Wars* trilogy features original props, models, costumes and artworks. Free timed same-day tickets are available at the museum's ticket desk. Advance tickets are available through ProTix for a service charge of $2.25 per ticket (call: 1-800-529-2440). For general information, call 202-786-2122 (24-hour recording).

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

America's Clothespins (February 14-June) Single-case display includes patent models of the inventive little device. *Science in American Life* Permanent show traces advances and discoveries in science over the past 125 years.

NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM
[NEAR UNION STATION ON CAPITOL HILL]

Mail to the Chief: The Stamp Designs of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (January 30-July 12) Postage stamps designed by avid collector FDR track the events that occupied his attention as President.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals New permanent gallery showcases the National Gem Collection and takes visitors from the depths of a copper mine to the far reaches of the Solar System.

NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK

Amazonia Permanent installation recreates a microcosm of the world's largest rain forest and river habitat.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

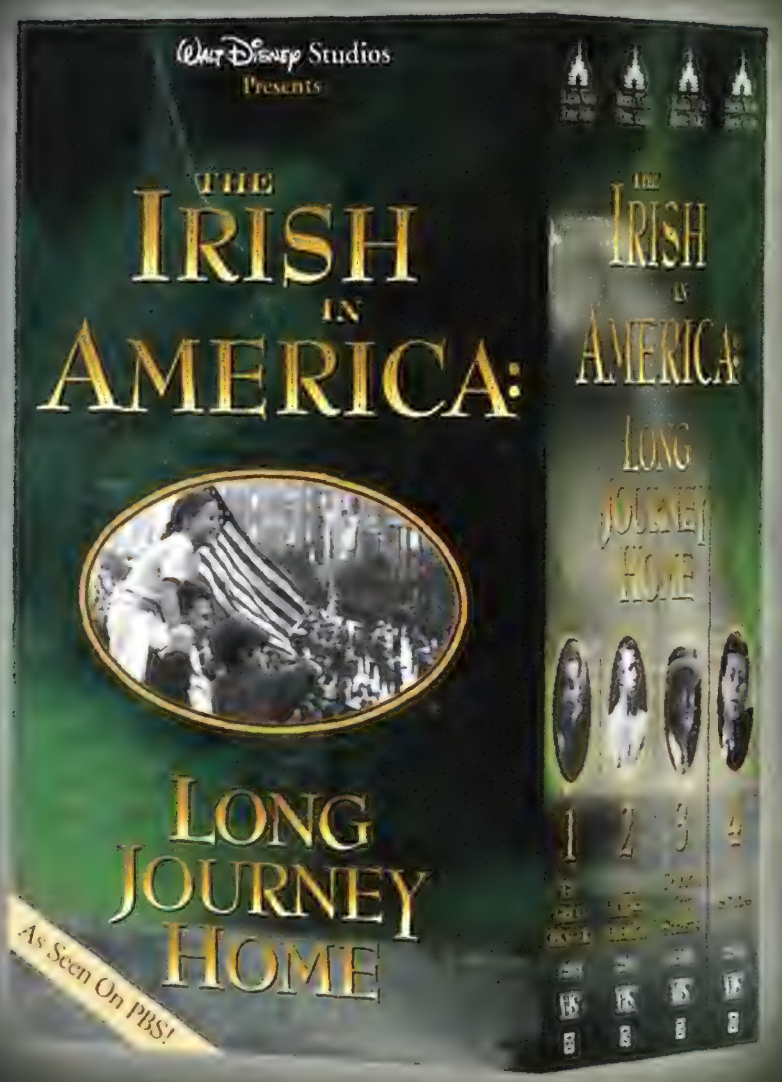
A Spiral of History: A Carved Tusk from the Loango Coast, Congo (February 1-April 26) A 19th-century carved ivory tusk bears scenes depicting historical, ceremonial and anecdotal events.

FREER GALLERY OF ART

Japanese Art of the Meiji Era (1868-1912) (through April 26) Paintings, drawings, ceramics, lacquer, metalwork and cloisonné from the Meiji era.

ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collections (through March 8) Exhibition features art from the Impe-



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The Wonder of Iron-8

Red Iron in Pottery

by Yoshimi Hasui

Japanese culture has influenced Western culture in many ways for several hundred years. Take pottery, for example. One of these Japanese influences is a gold-tinged red color called aka-e of Sakaida Kakiemon made from an iron compound called ferric oxide (Fe_2O_3). The color exerted a strong influence on European pottery via pieces brought back by the Dutch in the 17th century.

The literal meaning of aka-e is "red painting." This vivid red, born out of trial and error, was dubbed Kakiemon red for the family that discovered it. The color caught the imagination of a young researcher who resolved to crack the riddle as to how this color was achieved. That was over 30 years ago, and the young researcher, Dr. Toshio Takada, is now a professor at the Okayama University of Science.

The difference between Kakiemon red and other reds lies essentially in the size of the type of ferric oxide particles. For red-ochre red, the particle diameter must be 650 angstroms. For Kakiemon red, 700 angstroms. While the difference is minute, the difference is vast when perceived by the human eye.

The technique for reproducing the distinctive red has been passed down in generations as a secret of the Kakiemon family, and includes the right clay to collect, the right way to strain it, and the right length of time to knead it in a mortar.

Dr. Takada's research was later used to produce a bright red in modern pottery, and has also been used in research on ceramics which are difficult materials to control. A difference as minute as one 100 millionth of 1cm has actually changed the world of every day objects. In microelectronics, as well as material science, the microscopic world can no longer be ignored.

Yoshimi Hasui
Professor Hasui serves on the faculty of the Natural Science Division, Nihon Sakuyo, the Japanese version of "Scientific American." His special interests in material science include porcelain and CFC and superconductors.

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ARTS AND INDUSTRIES BUILDING

In Search of Balance: The ArtistScholar (through March 11) Artworks by five African-American scholars.

Discovery Theater Live theater for young audiences. Call 202-357-1500 (voice or TTY) weekdays, 9 A.M.- 4 P.M.

THE CASTLE—INFORMATION CENTER

Smithson's Gift Permanent display tells the story of the British scientist whose bequest founded the Smithsonian.

INTERNATIONAL GALLERY, S. DILLON RIPLEY CENTER

The World of Orchids (through March 8) Show sponsored by the Smithsonian's Horticulture Services Division and the U.S. Botanic Garden displays orchids from around the world.

ANACOSTIA MUSEUM

Man Made: African American Men in the Quilting Tradition (through June 23) Display of traditional and contemporary quilts by African-American men.

HEYE CENTER, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
[NEW YORK CITY]

Memory and Imagination: The Legacy of Maidu Indian Artist Frank Day (February 15-May 3) Exhibition features paintings by the self-taught 20th-century Native American artist.

COOPER-HEWITT, NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
[NEW YORK CITY]

The Jewels of Lalique (February 3-April 12) Art Nouveau jewelry and objets d'art by artist-jeweler René Lalique (1860-1945). See page 20.

Arquitectonica: The Times Square Project (February 17-May 10) Exhibition of the work of the Miami-based architectural firm focuses on their vision for a new multiuse complex in Times Square. See page 34.

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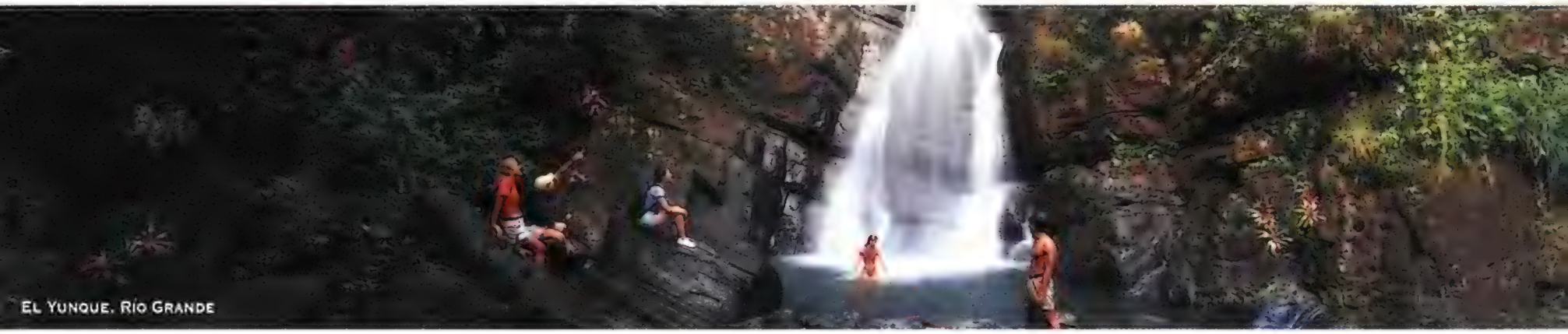

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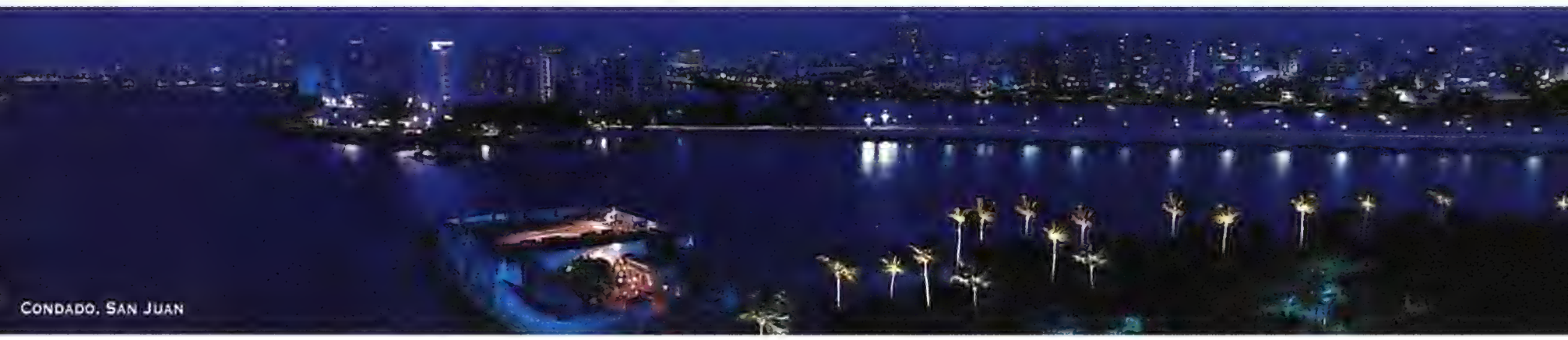

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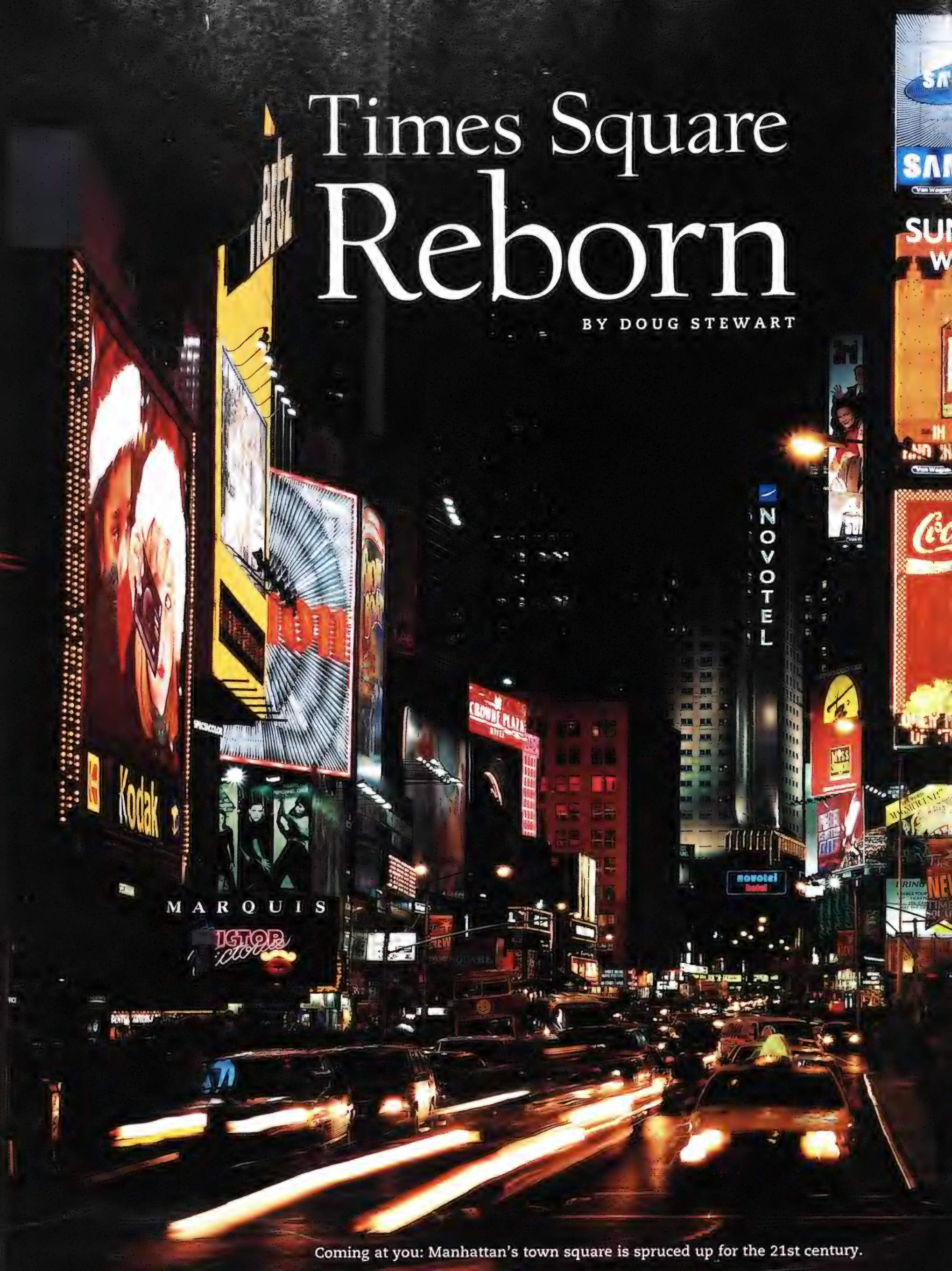
Times Square Reborn

BY DOUG STEWART



Coming at you: Manhattan's town square is spruced up for the 21st century.

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Coca-Cola

"THAT COKE SIGN HAS ITS OWN PHONE NUMBER," ED Hayman says. We're standing in Times Square at dusk like tourists, heads back, feet planted, watching a 42-foot animated Coca-Cola bottle go through its paces. High above the cab-filled junction of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, the bottle's giant cap slowly lifts up, a straw emerges and the bottle's contents seem to drain. Around it, an expanse of neon swirls and dances. The sign weighs 55 tons and incorporates 13,000 lightbulbs, 60 miles of fiber optics, miscellaneous robotic parts and a small weather station. And a phone. I ask Hayman, who works for New York's venerable Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, why anyone would want to call a billboard. "Mostly, we don't. It calls us." If a part of the sign overheats or gets stuck, he explains, a metallic computer voice will phone the sign-maker's office and report, "I Have Shut Down Sector Three," say, and give temperature readings and wind speeds, and do a sound check to boot. Artkraft, which built and maintains the sign, can't allow much downtime: for the privilege of having its name in lights here, Coca-Cola is paying more than a million dollars a year.

Times Square, long promoted locally as the heart of the Great White Way or, more grandly, the Crossroads of the World, has once again become the place to see and be seen in New York. For most of this century, the bow-tie-shaped clearing where the wayward diagonal of Broadway slices through the neat grid of Manhattan at Seventh Avenue and 42nd Street has been the closest thing the city's had to a town square. As midtown's central intersection, a tumultuous bus and subway hub, and a magnet for tourists, it's crowded in good times and bad. For the past 25 years or so, unfortunately, the times have mostly been bad. Despite its illustrious theaters, the vicin-

ity of Broadway, Seventh Avenue and 42nd Street during the 1970s and 1980s grew increasingly squalid and dangerous. Tourists kept coming, but they couldn't find much to do. New Yorkers, for the most part, passed through only to get somewhere else.

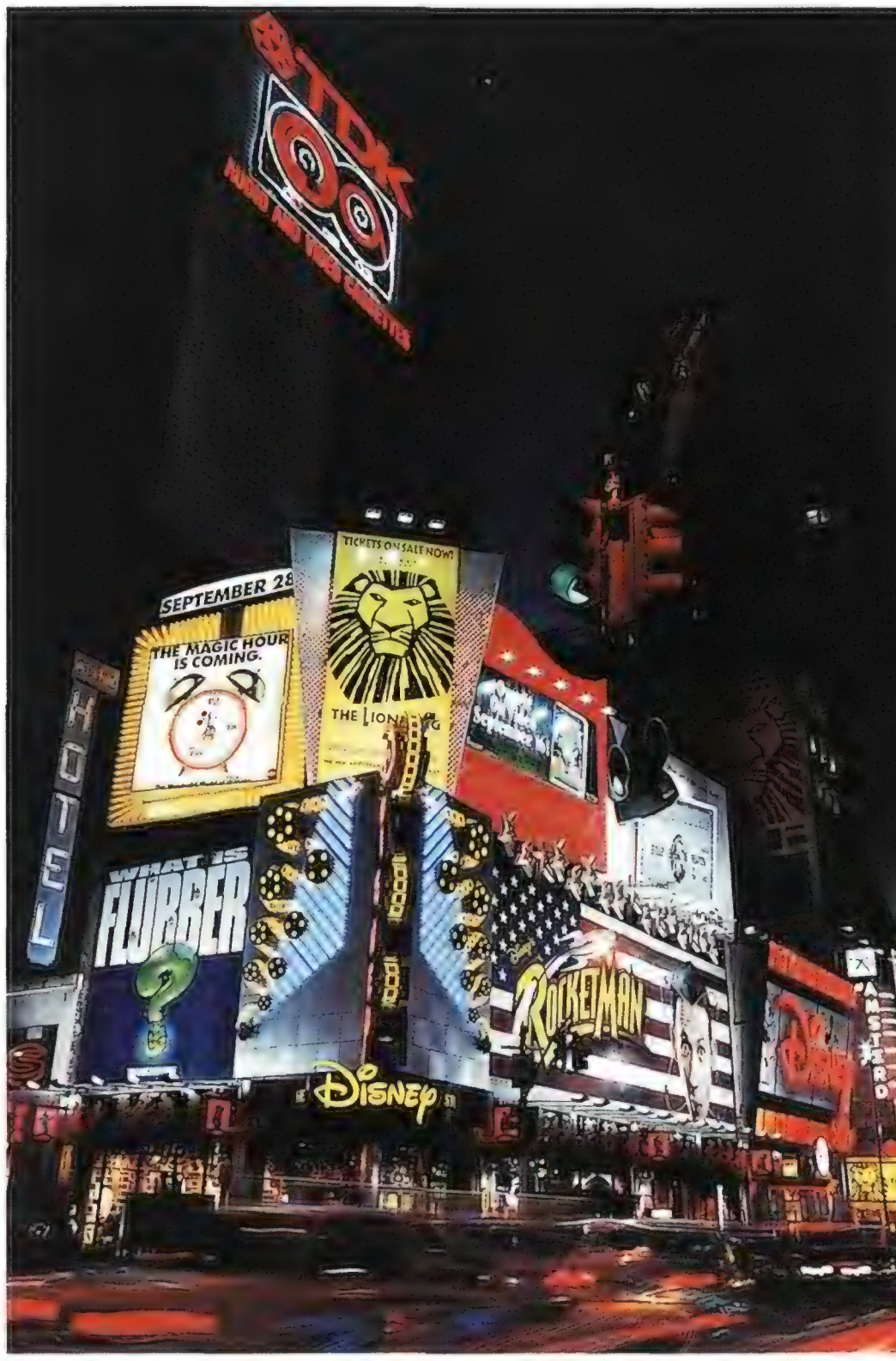
In little more than five years, however, the Times Square area has been reborn as the white-hot core of New York glitz. MTV, the rock-and-roll network, has set up shop here; and Condé Nast, the stylish publisher of *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, is in the process of doing so. There are new office buildings, new restaurants, new shops and arcades, newly restored theaters and, of course, new signs. "It's like a big party all the time," says Rebecca Robertson, former president of the state-run 42nd Street Development Project. "When I visit other parts of the city, I'm always surprised how empty the streets are."

Later this year, the Tishman Hotel Corporation will break ground at Eighth Avenue and 42nd Street for what is likely to become the most eye-catching symbol yet of the revitalized Times Square district. The as-yet-unnamed hotel will be a theatrically lighted 57-story skyscraper suggesting a crashing meteor—"a jazz fanfare for the millennium, an apocalypse with room service," architecture critic Herbert Muschamp wrote approvingly in the *New York Times*. The tower's architects, Bernardo Fort-Brescia and Laurinda Spear of Miami's Arquitectonica, describe it as a "deliberate evocation of chaos." (At the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York, the tower is the centerpiece of an exhibition about Arquitectonica's brand of daring, almost surreal modernism. Sponsored in part by the Smithsonian's Latino Initiatives Fund, the show runs from February 17 through May 10.)

Not everyone welcomes what's happening on Broadway, I learn when I attend a symposium at Columbia University about the new Times Square. A succession of writers and social critics warn that global corporations are conspiring to replace the gritty, constitutionally protected vitality of Times Square with a phony, sanitized, theme-park version, thus letting suburbanites sample the urban experience in safe doses. A favorite villain at the conference is the Walt Disney Company, which has opened a highly profitable superstore in the very heart of the square. One speaker praises the old Times Square for its "sexual energy," a quality Mickey Mouse has always lacked, being "hairless, sexless and hygienic." Despite all the polemics, I sense that few of the speakers ever spent much time rubbing shoulders with the crack dealers, prostitutes and pornography merchants that so recently dominated the area.

Gretchen Dykstra has much the same impression. A slim, animated New Yorker with a cascade of curly blonde hair, Dykstra is president of the Times Square Business Improvement District (BID), a group funded largely by a tax levied on local businesses to help boost the neighborhood's image. "There is a tendency among some academics to romanticize the gutter," she says when I visit her office overlooking the Coke bottle in Times Square. "When we started here in 1992, Times Square was an area of constant criminal activity. In 1994, there were 47 porn shops alone. Prostitution was a serious public health problem. There was nothing romantic about that."

On our way out for a tour of inspection, we pass a middle-aged woman in blue sitting in the reception area.



That old real estate chestnut—location, location, location—rules Times Square; in the 1980s, many 42nd Street theaters (left) ran films of questionable pedigree, but today (above) the area is hot.

Before and after: Once home to the Ziegfeld Follies, the New Amsterdam Theater, built in 1903, was a shambles before the $38-million restoration.

"She's one of the people sent over by the Midtown Community Court," Dykstra tells me in a low voice as we wait for the elevator, "probably a hooker." Minor offenders are routinely assigned to beef up BID's jumpsuited street-cleaning crews, which, like its security patrols, pick up where their municipal counterparts leave off.

Outside, the sidewalks are jammed with pinstriped corporate types as well as tourists and construction workers. Dykstra stops on a traffic island in the middle of the bow tie and points out the sights. "This hotel is the single biggest Marriott in the world. Over there is the world's largest music store. That McDonald's there never sleeps." Double-decker sight-seeing buses inch past the ubiquitous double-parked electricians' vans. The sounds of hammers and power drills compete with the unremitting din of traffic. The whole canyon of buildings seems to be in various stages of construction.

We head west down the "Deuce," the legendary stretch of 42nd Street running from Broadway to Eighth Avenue at the south end of Times Square proper—"naughty, bawdy, gaudy" 42nd Street, as the lyrics of the 1933 musical *42nd Street* boasted when this was the hub of Manhattan's nightlife. By the 1980s, the block had deteriorated into an open-air drug market lined with peep booths, topless bars and XXX-rated movie theaters. In those days, if you wandered along 42nd from the east, you knew at Seventh Avenue it was time to turn around unless you had business to transact. In 1990, the state finally condemned a huge chunk of the street as "blighted," took it over, then used tax breaks to lure classier long-term occupants. After a slow start, the revitalization strategy is now paying off. Under construction here and there, or already open, are restaurants, movie multiplexes, a Madame Tussaud's wax museum and a battery of restored theaters. "This has always been an entertainment district," Dykstra says as I watch a tourist snap a picture of her husband posing next to a boarded-up porn shop. "No one's out to change its basic gestalt. The new Times Square is based on the roots of the old Times Square."

The historic theaters that have been rescued include the New Victory, the Empire, the Apollo and the Lyric (immortalized in the 1976 film *Taxi Driver* as the run-down movie house where Robert De Niro takes a reluctant Cybill Shepherd to see *Swedish Marriage Manual*). Actually, the Lyric and the Apollo have been combined, creating the new Ford Center for the Performing Arts. The gem of the

If you wandered along 42nd Street, at Seventh Avenue you knew it was time to turn around.

whole block is the New Amsterdam Theater, once home to the Ziegfeld Follies. After years of abandonment, with the roof open to weather and giant mushrooms thriving inside, the theater was painstakingly restored by Disney to its 1903 Art Nouveau splendor last year and has begun premiering serious theatrical fare. Last fall, *The Lion King*, directed by Julie Taymor (SMITHSONIAN, February 1993), opened and immediately became a smash hit.

Dykstra is eager to show me that it's not just Disney money that's turning Times Square around. As she strides north on Eighth Avenue, she points out her favorite new arrivals amid the clumps of remaining porn shops: a new pizzeria that's moved into a renovated turn-of-the-century church, a small nonprofit theater that's taken over an abandoned bank, a diner that used to be an adult theater. She stops at the corner of 46th Street. "This building used to be an absolutely notorious drug den. It's now a bed-and-breakfast."

She scoffs at those who say Times Square is losing its diversity. "You've got the biggest single-room-occupancy hotel in the United States just down the street from a brand-new, high-priced boutique hotel. You've got the $75-a-ticket Broadway crowd, and you've got fast-food restaurants. Times Square is big enough for everybody."

It was probably inevitable that Times Square would be cleaned up. As real estate, the place was too conveniently located to be left to rot indefinitely. But it could easily have been scrubbed so clean as to become unrecognizable. In the mid-1980s, developer George Klein of Park Tower Realty teamed up with the Prudential Insurance Company to win the right to build four colossal, near-identical office towers on 42nd Street in the heart of Times Square. Klein announced: "Times Square is a cancer, a blot on the city; we're going to clean it up." The granite-clad monoliths he proposed, designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee, were denounced by civic groups and community leaders as too big, too ugly and too wrong for the neighborhood. The uproar led to amended zoning rules: henceforth, new buildings in Times Square *had* to have shops with bright lights and huge signs to dazzle pedestrians. Pizzazz has its price, however: many of the office workers who have relocated here find themselves staring out their windows at the backs of billboards.

Brendan Sexton is president of the Municipal Art Society, one of the groups that lobbied to keep Times Square from becoming a corporate subsidiary of sterile, boxy Sixth Avenue. "I laugh," he says, "because the building owners who fought like crazy against us now can't knock holes in their buildings fast enough to put up another sign. They've discovered they make more money renting signs than renting office space."

Times Square has always been about money. Those who lament some long-ago golden age, when the area was somehow more authentic and uplifting and genuinely fun, tend to have trouble specifying just when that might have been. In fact, Times Square from the start was not a public commons but a marketplace, an arena dominated more by real-estate speculators than by architects or dramatists. Oscar Hammerstein I set the tone in 1895 when he opened the first theater in what was then Longacre Square, a grimy neighborhood of stables and carriage-repair shops.

Over the top: last winter a half-size model of a British Airways Concorde was hoisted to the roof of Hansen's Times Square Brewery by signmeisters Artkraft Strauss.

Amid the glitz and glitter, Times Square has also hosted a variety of porn shops, brothels (as many as 63 of them back in 1901) and other "adults only" establishments. Their numbers, say area boosters, have shrunk from a 1970s high of 140 to about 20 now.

To guarantee excitement on opening night, he apparently issued 4,000 more tickets than the Olympia had seats; the ensuing riots earned him page-one coverage.

A theatrical building boom quickly followed. In his 1911 history of Broadway, *The Greatest Street in the World*, Stephen Jenkins wrote of the theaters around Times Square: "It's hard work to keep track of them; they spring up like mushrooms, almost in a single night." Not all of them were premiering Ibsen and Shaw: also appearing nightly were "young ladies" in tights, female impersonators, fan dancers, acrobats and circus freaks. Prostitution flourished. As far back as 1901, the city tallied 63 brothels, many of them clustered around the neighborhood's new theaters. Soon to come were burlesque houses, dime-a-dance emporiums and novelties like Hubert's Flea Circus. An early 42nd Street attraction was Murray's Roman Gardens, a forerunner of today's themed restaurants, with Greco-Roman-Egyptian decor and erotic murals masquerading as classical art. Murray's advertising was equally scrambled: "Within earshot of the noisy iron horse, [the diner] can be transported as though on the famous carpet of Mahomet, back into ancient Rome. . . ."

The Times Square esthetic was never subtle. It aimed to draw a crowd, and it did. Visitors to New York from anywhere in the world, it was said, could stand at the corner of 42nd and Broadway for half an hour and be sure to bump into someone they knew. Taking advantage of the foot traffic, advertisers erected ever-brighter signs and marquees that made midnight seem like a reasonable hour. G. K. Chesterton commented in 1922: "What a glorious garden of wonders this would be, to any one who was lucky enough to be unable to read."

Tama Starr, third-generation president of the Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, doesn't agree, of course. The 101-year-old company builds and installs most of Times Square's giant illuminated signs, or "spectaculars." "Times Square is an advertising park. It's not Rockefeller Center," she tells me when I visit her office in an old industrial

The Camel man just kept puffing, one smoke ring every four seconds, until 1966.

building overlooking the Hudson River. And like Yosemite, it's a park with its own special attractions. One was a 1947 roof sign designed by Douglas Leigh for the Bond Building, which was at that time a clothing store on the east side of Broadway. "It had a waterfall a block long and 50 feet high," Starr says. "It used 50,000 gallons of water with antifreeze and had 23 recirculating pumps. On each side were 60-foot nude statues wearing gold togas made of neon." The effect was stunning, she assures me. "And the splashing water released positive ions, which are health-giving."

Another of her favorites was the Camel sign that blew giant smoke rings (steam, actually). Also a Leigh design, the billboard was installed in June 1941. "The great thing about that sign is that it anticipated the war—it didn't use lights," Starr says. Indeed, the government soon ordered Times Square blacked out above street level so German U-boats couldn't pick out ship silhouettes against the glow. The Camel man just kept puffing, one smoke ring every four seconds, until 1966.

After dark, I tour Times Square with Artkraft publicist and in-house historian Ed Hayman. Oblivious to the jostling crowds, Hayman, a former theater critic, talks affably about the Times Square that starts ten feet off the ground, from the exact half-scale model of British Airway's Concorde that weighs as much as the real thing to the neon-accented spectacular at the 42nd Street subway station announcing the 11 lines that converge here. We stop to admire the new Morgan Stanley headquarters at the north end of the bow tie. Three streams of financial data move magically across the face of the building at different heights and slightly different speeds; I can't understand a bit of it, but I'm hypnotized by the effect. "That's the largest outdoor LED display in the world. Those letters are ten feet high," Hayman says. "The whole building is an information device."

Its progenitor is the Zipper, just down the street. The Zipper is the ribbon of news bulletins that scurries around the Times Tower, the wedge-shaped structure where the ball drops each New Year's Eve. (The tower was built as a Florentine campanile in 1904 to house the *New York Times*, which persuaded the city to rename the square in its honor. Now mostly empty, the building serves mainly as a billboard holder.) "Even as the Zipper went up in 1928," Hayman says, "Times Square was already the place to go if there was a big event. On election night, on New Year's Eve, during prizefights, people would get on the subway and come here to be part of the crowd watching the Zipper and waiting for news." History didn't really happen here first; New York-based news photographers and newsreel cameramen just made it seem as though it did. The Zipper has now been eclipsed by the captioned news reports on the enormous NBC/Panasonic Astrovision TV that hangs just above it. Still, the tradition persists. When Princess Diana died last summer, Hayman says, people jammed the sidewalks here to follow the news in lights, perhaps comforted to be part of a crowd.

And the new Times Square is crowded indeed. Well into the night, the sidewalks are awash in humanity—clean-cut teenagers out on dates, theatergoers flocking to restaurants and a surprising number of moms pushing strollers. The torrents of pedestrians stream around the ubiquitous tourists pointing video cameras, who stand fast like little

In the 1980s, before the current revival of Times Square, street-corner reformers were as common a sight as the adult establishments.

Times Square: *X* Marks the Spot

The crossroads of Manhattan, where Broadway slices across Seventh Avenue and 42nd Street, Times Square has had its share of ups and downs since Oscar Hammerstein I opened the first theater in 1895 (back then, it was called Longacre Square). A few of the "ups," clockwise from above: crowds flood the square on May 7, 1945, on news that Germany has surrendered; 20 inches of snow blanket the Great White Way in December 1948; the Times Tower in 1926; the much-loved Camel sign, which went down in 1966, blows smoke rings (actually, steam); and—from VJ Day—Alfred Eisenstaedt's famous photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse.

JOAN OF ARC
INGRID BERGMAN
INGRI
BERG
JOAN
BY MAXWELL AN
PRODUCED BY WALTER
COLOR BY TECH
SIM
LONDON

Bud
TICKETS

Camel
I'D WALK A MILE FOR A CAMEL
CAFETERIA
ARROW SHIRTS
HECTORS
Sale

Designed by the Miami-based architecture firm Arquitectonica, this jazzy 57-story skyscraper will be Times Square's newest landmark.

erosion-resistant islands. On Broadway and 42nd, I talk with a young Finnish couple here on their first visit. The woman has been avidly taking snapshots of signs. "In Finland, we have small signs with small lights. Everything is rather dim. This is totally different," she says. Her husband is more emphatic. "This is beautiful. When we show these pictures to our friends, they will all want to come."

Of the many razzle-dazzle attractions luring people to Times Square, none can match the scale, ingenuity and sheer chutzpah of the Arquitectonica-designed hotel tower soon to rise over Eighth Avenue. For all of Broadway's bright lights, architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia tells me, it has always lacked a distinctive profile on the Manhattan skyline. "We needed to create a vertical icon that people downtown or across the river would recognize and say, 'There's Times Square.'" Yet it couldn't be gaudy or overly theatrical, he says. "We wanted to maintain a level of architectural integrity. We couldn't just put a big sign on top with an arrow: 'Theater District Here.'"

The Tishman hotel is Arquitectonica's first major New York project, but the firm was an apt choice for the job. Founded in 1978 by the Peruvian-born, Princeton-educated Fort-Brescia, his American wife, Laurinda Spear, and three other coprincipals (who later left the firm), Arquitectonica helped recast Miami in the 1980s as a hip tropical metropolis. The Atlantis, a beachfront high-rise with a hole in the middle, was featured weekly in the opening montage of the TV show *Miami Vice*. (The hole contained a red spiral staircase, a Jacuzzi and the world's most famous palm tree.)

For Times Square, Fort-Brescia and Spear wanted the skyscraper itself, top to bottom, to serve as an illuminated billboard—a 950-room spectacular. The result is a two-tone asymmetrical tower that a bolt of light seems to be splitting in half. "The lighting could shoot up the side of the building and into the sky," Fort-Brescia says, "or it could shoot down and explode in the ground." The explosion idea is picked up by a profusion of signage erupting from a retail arcade at street level conceived by D'Agostino Izzo Quirk Architects. Between this and the set-back skyscraper, Arquitectonica designed a smallish boutique hotel with a more painterly exterior—a floodlighted collage of New York attractions borrowed from old souvenir postcards. "It creates this gigantic billboard of a vacation in New York," Fort-Brescia says enthusiastically, sounding as though he's ready to book a two-week vacation in Times Square right now.

If Times Square's momentum continues, of course, other flamboyantly styled skyscrapers may soon cluster around Arquitectonica's, clamoring for attention. The Municipal Art Society's Brendan Sexton is an Arquitectonica fan, but he, for one, doesn't worry about its design being upstaged. "Actually, I hope it does get competition. Times Square should be a harmonious jumble. Its harmony will always be different from what you will find anywhere else. It's a harmony of the outlandish."

New England freelancer Doug Stewart avoids malls and theme parks but loves the new Times Square.

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REMEMBER THE MAINE

IT HAS BEEN A CENTURY SINCE THE STORIED DREADNOUGHT SANK, BUT CONTROVERSY HAS NOT YET ABANDONED THE SHIP

To learn the story of the USS *Maine*, pull up a rickety wooden chair with me at Dos Hermanos, a dockside bar on Avenida del Puerto in Havana's sprawling harbor district. If you had been out with pre-Lenten celebrants at Dos Hermanos on February 15, one hundred years ago, you would have seen a shiny American battleship dominating the bay. Cuba, then fighting for its independence from Spain, had drawn the world's attention for the tenacity of its guerrilla forces against a sophisticated European power. Off and on for three decades the notion of "Cuba Libre," a free Cuba, had motivated the country's intellectuals, campesinos and slaves. The intermittent war attracted a youthful Winston Churchill, an aging Clara Barton, and a host of other foreigners for a firsthand look at insurgency and its ghastly consequences.

The harbor was busy in early 1898. Since its arrival three weeks before, the *Maine* had been moored to buoy No. 4 between a Spanish ship, the *Alfonso XII*, and a German square-rigger, the *Gneisenau*. Earlier that February 15, the *City of Washington*, a Ward Line steamer full of Americans, had arrived and anchored about 300 yards away. Bars like Dos Hermanos were full of sailors, dockhands, international traders and the *habaneros*—Havana residents—who catered to them. Spain had recently given a measure of autonomy to Cuba, a move that satisfied neither the liberationists, who demanded full independence; the Spanish merchants, who benefited from colonialism; or the occupying army, which ceded power reluctantly. Gen. Ramón Blanco, who had been installed by Spain

By Tom Miller

On February 15, 1898, a mysterious explosion destroyed the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor.

Members of the *Maine*'s crew assembled on the ship's forward deck circa 1897, before the fateful trip to Cuba. Only 84 of the 350 crew and officers aboard survived the devastating blast.

as Cuba's governor-general only three months earlier, replacing the repressive Gen. Valeriano Weyler, had a thankless task. He and his underlings received the *Maine* with politic cordiality. His men gave Capt. Charles D. Sigsbee and his officers a case of Spanish sherry, locally rolled cigars and box seats to the bullfights. At Dos Hermanos and other bars, Spanish wine flowed.

On board the *Maine* that Tuesday night, sailors danced to an accordion in the starboard gangway; elsewhere a crewman plucked the strings of a mandolin. Shortly after 9 o'clock you might have heard C. H. Newton, the *Maine*'s bugler from Washington, D.C., blow taps. The handsome ship bobbed listlessly, its nose pointing slightly northwest, its imposing 100-yard length visible from stem to stern for all Havana to see. The three-year-old vessel, despite its rank as a "second-class" battleship, was well-known within the military establishment. "I wish there was a chance that the *Maine* was going to be used against some foreign power," Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt had written a month earlier, "by preference Germany—but . . . I'd take even Spain if nothing better offered."

At 9:40 P.M. the *Maine*'s forward end abruptly lifted itself from the water. Along the pier, passersby could hear a rumbling explosion. Within seconds, another eruption—this one deafening and massive—splintered the bow, sending anything that wasn't battened down, and most that was, flying more than 200 feet into the air. Bursts of flame and belches of smoke filled the night sky; water flooded into the lower decks and quickly rose to the upper ones. Some sailors were thrown violently from the blazing ship and drowned in the harbor. Others, just falling asleep in their hammocks, were pancaked between floors and ceilings fused together by the sudden, intense heat. Still more drowned on board or suffocated from overpowering smoke. In all, 266 of the 350 men aboard the *Maine* were killed, including bugler Newton.

"I first noticed a trembling and buckling of the decks," Pvt. William Anthony of Albany later recalled, "and then this prolonged roar." Lt. Comdr. Richard Wainright remembered he felt "a very heavy shock, and heard the noise

The pride of the American fleet, the *Maine* was equipped with some of the U.S. Navy's most advanced technology. The imposing warship was sent to Cuba on a mission of "friendly courtesy."

of objects falling on deck. I was under the impression that we were being fired upon." Marine sergeant Michael Mehan was "fired overboard—lifted clear off the gangway." Each survivor had his own horrific tale—of inching along dark hallways in rapidly rising water, of gases and smoke, and grasping for lifelines tossed by the hastily assembled rescue crew of the *Alfonso XII*. The wonder is not that 266 died but that 84 actually survived. "From the waters and from the ship came the heart-rending cries of our men, 'Help me! Save me!'" recollected the *Maine*'s chaplain, John Chidwick. "Immediately I gave them absolution."

From Dos Hermanos you could feel the explosion. As the air thickened and lights went out, people instinctively streamed toward the dock. The explosion hit with such force that Havana's power plant was temporarily knocked out. Firemen rushed to the harbor. The foreign press, a chummy and highly competitive bunch, emerged from its lair at the Hotel Inglaterra coffee shop and raced to the waterfront. Two of them got by harbor guards by claiming to be ship's officers.

Captain Sigsbee, who had been in his cabin in the aft section of the ship at the time of the blast, groped his way to the deck, assessed the damage and ordered all hands into the lifeboats. When he finally stepped into one himself, he was the last to leave the sinking ship. The dreadful explosion had taken place less than one hour earlier, but the aftermath seemed to hang in time. Sigsbee went straight to the *City of Washington*, where Spanish officials rushed to offer help. There he scribbled a telegram to Washington with the most important words of his life: "*Maine* blown up in Havana harbor at nine forty tonight and destroyed. Many wounded and doubtless more killed or drowned. . . . Public opinion should be suspended until further report. . . . Many Spanish officers including representatives of General Blanco now with me to express sympathy." The captain tried to sleep on the Ward Line steamer, but moans from injured sailors in a makeshift sickbay and explosions from his own ship's magazines kept him awake most of the night.

The *Maine* was in Havana, officially, on a mission of

In the weeks following the disaster, the ship's rigging was still in place, but her mangled bow was entirely submerged. The ruins of her forward superstructure are visible to the right of the mast.

friendly courtesy and, incidentally, to protect American lives and property should the need arise. Yet the visit was neither spontaneous nor altruistic; the United States had been eyeing Cuba for almost a century. "I candidly confess," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1809, "that I have ever looked upon Cuba as the most interesting addition that can be made to our system of States." The following year President Madison warned Great Britain to keep its hands off the island. And in the late 1820s, John Quincy Adams declared that Cuba had become "an object of transcendent importance to the commercial and political interests of our Union." He likened the island to an apple that could fall from its native tree and "gravitate only towards the North American Union."

Cubans were wary of the *Maine*'s presence in their harbor. For many, then as now, the ship came to symbolize unwarranted intrusion. But the islanders already had the Spanish to contend with. Spain's strategy in 1896-97 under Governor-General Weyler was simple: round up everyone in the countryside and herd them into military townships. This, Weyler reasoned, would deprive the insurgents of support. The results of his plan were catastrophic. Cubans lived in concentration-camp conditions—severe crowding, almost no food, and rampant disease. Untended crops throughout the country went to waste as thousands starved; many died. Americans learned of this inhumanity with increasing horror and sympathized squarely with Cuba Libre. Despite Weyler's ruthless approach, however, the persistent Cuban insurgents were close to exhausting the superior Spanish land forces when the *Maine* arrived on its "friendly" mission. "We're here," says a marine aboard the *Maine* in Elmore Leonard's new novel, *Cuba Libre*, "in case it looks like the Cubans are gonna take over their own country before we get a chance to do it ourselves." Spain's shameful strategy, coupled with our long-time lust for Cuba, produced ideal conditions for the United States to enter the fray. Our destiny was manifest; the apple finally looked ready to fall.

The day after the explosion, Spanish authorities offered to bury the dead at Havana's Colón Cemetery, a plan Captain Sigsbee and U.S. Consul General Fitzhugh Lee readily accepted. Neither logistics nor climate lent themselves to storing or shipping unidentified mutilated corpses. Flowers and wreaths smothered the coffins lying in state at the municipal palace in the hours before the cortege made its way through the streets of Havana. Gen. Máximo

"Probability the Maine destroyed by mine, perhaps by accident. I can only surmise this."

Gómez, who commanded the Cuban revolutionary army, sent condolences. So did Queen Victoria.

The sheer magnitude of the explosion and its aftermath, coupled with Captain Sigsbee's admonition that the public not rush to judgment, created a bubble of suspended opinion in the States. Newspapers initially reported the catastrophe without elaboration, leaving blame and lurid detail for another day. At first, President William McKinley and Secretary of the Navy John Long considered the possibility that the ship's destruction was due to an accident. It could well have been an internal problem; explosions from faulty wiring and self-igniting coal had plagued the Navy for years. But the bubble of suspended judgment soon burst. On February 17, William Randolph Hearst's New York *Journal* headlined, "THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS SPLIT IN TWO BY AN ENEMY'S SECRET INFERNAL MACHINE." It showed drawings revealing how an explosive device had been planted beneath the *Maine* and how it was detonated from shore. Joseph Pulitzer's New York *World* gave readers a choice—"MAINE EXPLOSION CAUSED BY BOMB OR TORPEDO?"—and immediately sent divers to Havana "to learn the truth." The New York *Herald* and the *Journal*, which offered a $50,000 reward for evidence of a mine, were eager to send their own underwater investigative teams. Reporters in Havana were on top of the story, and their editors in the States were determined to squeeze every drop of tragedy possible from their coverage.

From Havana's Hotel Inglaterra, Charles Sigsbee, now a captain without portfolio, composed a second message to the Navy brass the day after the explosion—this one coded: "Probability the *Maine* destroyed by mine, perhaps by accident. I surmise that her berth was planted previous to her arrival; perhaps long ago. I can only surmise this."

The United States and Spain immediately established investigatory panels; diplomacy was their first casualty. The harbor and its waters were Spain's, and the Spanish restrained American divers from nosing about. The *Maine*'s mangled torso was American, and the United States restricted Spanish efforts to get a good look. No Spaniards testified before the American inquiry, headed by Capt. William T. Sampson; no American Navy personnel appeared before the Spanish board, led by Capt. Pedro del Peral.

The United States had not fought on foreign soil since the Mexican War in the late 1840s. All the catalysts that bring on war were in place—land to be grabbed, money to be made, diplomatic trump cards to be played, wrongs to be righted, influence to be widened, evil to be avenged and a military ready to be mobilized—all these the *Maine*'s explosion galvanized. President McKinley—spineless as "a chocolate éclair," wrote Teddy Roosevelt—wanted to wait until the formal inquiry into the tragedy was concluded before calling for war against Spain, but he was about the last American with that much patience. The families of sailors killed on the battleship urged the President to jump into the fracas. Throughout America, eager teenagers asked where they could enlist. Newspapers fed the fever as congressmen were deluged with letters calling for revenge on Spain. Governor Culberson of Texas sent Rangers to guard the Mexican border against an invasion by "Spanish sympathizers." Maine's Governor Llewellyn, fearing attack by Spain, asked for Navy cruisers to defend his jagged 4,500-mile coastline. Behind the scenes Spain refused to sell Cuba outright to the United States. Consul General Lee called for eventual annexation, beginning with occupation. Havana could sniff the foul scent of impending war.

The investigations into the explosion took myriad factors into account. Since neither a geyser of water erupted nor hundreds of dead fish floated to the surface immediately after the blast, it was likely an onboard accident. But to contradict this, the magazines and bunkers were at normal temperature that evening, which meant the explosion probably came from outside. Were bits of a mine found on the muddy harbor floor? Could divers detect a major hole in the hull? Did other ships feel shock waves? Naval experts from around the world stepped forward to volunteer their own conjectures.

The Sampson investigation results came back within a month: the blast was not accidental; a mine had exploded beneath the *Maine*. The four Navy jurists were careful to add, however, that no evidence had "been obtainable fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the *Maine* upon any person or persons." Despite this disclaimer, given public opinion, they might as well have proclaimed Spain guilty of mass murder. Meanwhile, McKinley, in office just a year and mindful that his Republican-majority Congress was up for reelection in less than nine months, asked for $50 million to beef up the military. At the same time, Spain's Captain Peral stitched together his country's evidence, convincing but circumstantial, that the *Maine* was destroyed by the proximity of its magazines to its coal bunkers—in other words, an internal explosion.

Reaction to the *Maine*'s destruction took many forms. Americans grieved, opened up their hearts and wallets to *Maine* widows and orphans, sought solace in religion—and came up with money-raising schemes. Even before the investigations were complete, a Johnstown, New York, glove-maker suggested breaking up what was left of the

Moored outside the cofferdam where she was resurrected after 13 years of submersion, the once-proud ship, dewatered and seaworthy, was ready to be towed out of the harbor to the open sea.

Maine into mementos. "The wood," he wrote, "could be made into canes." The Siegel-Cooper department store asked the government for the *Maine*'s scrap to cut into "souvenirs, buttons, scarf pins, watch charms, medallions . . . and many other attractive trinkets"—all income to be turned over to *Maine* widows and orphans. A Montana lawyer asked his congressman where to send the $444.25 that a local band had raised at a benefit for *Maine* families.

"Remember the *Maine*!"—a slogan first given notoriety by the press—became the five most common syllables in America. It was printed on peppermint lozenges, buttons and posters; it appeared in theaters on Friday night and churches on Sunday morning. Newsstands sold toy *Maines* made of highly flammable material; one light and *whoosh*! "Shop windows and family sitting rooms," noted historian Margaret Leech in *The Age of McKinley*, "enshrined pictures and models of the lost battleship." In Havana, the menu at the Plaza de Luz restaurant included "chicken fricassee à la Maine."

On April 25, 1898, Congress formally declared war on Spain. Sea battles at the Santiago de Cuba harbor and land battles just outside Santiago at El Caney and San Juan Hill followed. On May 1, George Dewey defeated the Spanish Navy at Manila Bay (SMITHSONIAN, March 1993). By summer's end, Spain had ceded Cuba, along with the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam, and had ceased to be a sea power. It was, wrote U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain John Hay, "a splendid little war." But when Spain surrendered Cuba, it was not to the long-suffering insurgent forces that had held it at bay; it was to the United States, which had been there only a few months. Despite having coordinated its troops with the U.S. campaign, and notwithstanding its contributions to American military strategy, Cuba was shunted aside, the leaders of its decades-long struggle for independence reduced to spectators.

The *Maine* grew as a symbol in American culture, one as easily understood in Midwestern cornfields as in the boardrooms of industry. Literally hundreds of songs were written about the ship and its fate, most of them titled "Remember the *Maine*." Some were vengeful, others sang of a sailor's dying request, still others simply mourned.

The Advisory Committee for Battleship Maine Relief Fund handled requests from the families of the 266 *Maine* dead. Relatives wrote letters pleading poverty, and the

At 5:21 P.M. on March 16, 1912, under lowering skies, the USS *Maine* began the 600-fathom descent to her watery grave. In the United States, much of the nation paused for a moment of silence.

committee sent money, usually $50 per victim. U.S. consuls overseas often acted as intermediaries for immigrant families of Irish, Norwegian, German or other nationality whose sons had served on the *Maine*. "All my happiness, all my hopes went down with the *Maine*," a German-immigrant mother wrote of her 26-year-old sailor son.

The casualties who had been buried in Havana were disinterred at the end of 1899 and reburied at Arlington National Cemetery. Captain Sigsbee was reunited with his men for a time, escorting their caskets from Havana to their final resting place overlooking the Potomac. "There was no note of triumph in the grim scene," the *New York Times* observed of the burial ceremony. Pioneer filmmaker Albert Smith shot three minutes of the procession, then rented his silent footage to an opera house where an orchestra accompanied the powerful images.

The ship's assistant engineer, John R. Morris, committed suicide a few years later. His friends claimed his anguish sprang from a secret he held that the explosion was due to defective electrical wiring and not a Spanish mine. Other theories abounded. A New Yorker maintained that the motive for blowing up the *Maine* was robbery, and claimed to know how much money was stolen and where it was buried. Sailors were said to have been smoking off-limits in the lower decks. Rumors of mines planted by loyal followers of the sacked General Weyler were not uncommon around Cuba; the U.S. consul at Matanzas, 60 miles east of Havana, said he had learned of a plot to blow up the *Maine* a couple of days before the explosion and immediately notified the consul general in Havana.

It was impossible to forget the *Maine*; its carcass lay in Havana Harbor protruding above the water, a grisly tourist attraction and a macabre reminder of the war. Over the years a stream of suggestions flowed into the Navy Department regarding ways to dispose of the ship's remains. A Kansas lawyer wanted it preserved until the Panama Canal was completed, then towed to San Francisco for display there. Another fellow suggested that the *Maine* be beached along the Havana shoreline. "It will be an interest to tens of thousands of American travelers." Despite efforts to prevent looting of the battleship's carcass, a Havana merchant a few blocks from the Dos Hermanos bar advertised that in his store shoppers could sit in actual chairs from the *Maine*. In 1903 the Cuban government told the United

States that the ship was a menace to navigation and requested that it be removed. Frustrated when the United States did nothing, Cuba let out bids for the ship's removal. One Joseph De Wyckoff landed the contract, paying the Cuban treasury a $2,500 good-faith deposit. He solicited investors at one dollar a share: "We invite your attention to the financial possibilities of this undertaking, as well as to the patriotic and sentimental features of it." In the end, nothing came of De Wyckoff's grandiose scheme.

The *Maine* assumed the status of exotica, its identity borrowed from war, foreign shores and death, patriotism, sacrifice and valor. The American public, however, like the Cuban government, grew wary of its location. Congress finally got the hint and in March 1910 authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to dispose of the twisted hulk. The Corps stayed at Havana's Plaza Hotel and scratched their heads over how best to get rid of the ship. Their solution: build an immense cofferdam around the *Maine*, pump out the water surrounding the ship and then dewater the ship itself. Next they would make the *Maine*'s skeleton seaworthy, and finally flood the cofferdam so a tugboat could haul the carcass into international waters, where it would sink peacefully to the bottom of the sea.

The elliptical cofferdam consisted of some 20 interlocking cylinders driven deep into the harbor bottom. By mid-1911, after more than half a year of construction, workers began to pump water out of the enclosure. By the time they were done examining the wreckage, they had found parts of skeletons from some 70 more of the *Maine* dead. They also discovered Newton's bugle.

It was an unprecedented engineering feat, and during the two years between the authorization and its realization a curious sideshow played out back home. The Navy allowed *Maine* survivors and families of deceased crewmen to apply for relics from the ship, which, as workers progressed on the grand plan, accumulated considerably. Cities and war veterans groups could likewise petition for newly uncovered *Maine* remains.

Letters came in from across America: heirs, Spanish War veterans groups, municipalities—they all wanted a piece of the *Maine*. Kansas City, Kansas, wanted "a memento to use in our parks." Sheldon, North Dakota, got a six-inch shell; Yonkers, New York, a pair of binoculars. Watt Cluverius, a midshipman who survived the *Maine*, asked for a revolver. The commander in chief of the United Spanish War Veterans asked for a thousand pounds of scrap brass and bronze to melt down into individual plaques.

Press coverage was remarkably tame, considering its original role in creating a symbol out of the *Maine*. The best it could do was "FIRST BONES ARE FOUND ON MAINE," in the *Havana Post* of June 20, 1911. When reports

The funeral cortege bearing the *Maine* victims found during the 1911 "dry autopsy" of the battleship makes its way along Washington, D.C.'s Pennsylvania Avenue before the burial at Arlington.

filtered north that pencils and rubber bands had been found, Eberhard Faber, the owner of a Brooklyn pencil plant, wrote the Secretary of the Navy: "I feel very confident that some of these goods were of my manufacture, and I would esteem it a great favor if I might be enabled to obtain these goods." A Cuban diver found a ring from the Naval Academy's class of 1895 belonging to Darwin Merritt, an engineer who had drowned on board. The diver surreptitiously pocketed it and later, at a Havana café, sold it to an American reporter. The journalist returned it to the family, who gave it to the Naval Academy.

Captain Sigsbee's effects seemed to withstand the years well. Corps workers came up with his inkwell, derby hat, typewriter and shaving mug. They also located his pipe, overshoes, chamber pot and handcuffs. Some *Maine* relics ended up at the Naval Academy or at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C.; a few wound up in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. The ship's mainmast is at Arlington National Cemetery perched next to the burial site of 229 *Maine* sailors. Its foremast stands 30

miles away on the waterfront in Annapolis. For this reason Navy people like to say that the *Maine* is the longest ship in the world.

Cubans had been under three flags—the Spanish, the American and their own—between the *Maine*'s explosion and the effort to raise the ship. The postwar U.S. military occupation lasted until May 1902, but a treaty called the Platt Amendment, forced on Cuba by Congress, allowed the United States to send in troops whenever it wanted. It did on a few occasions, and the Platt Amendment wasn't abrogated until 1934. Meanwhile, as shipbuilding became more sophisticated and analysis increasingly exhaustive, more and more postmortems acknowledged that the *Maine*'s destruction could have been self-inflicted.

The Navy undertook a second inquiry in late 1911, this one headed by Adm. Charles Vreeland. He and the four others on his team had the enormous benefit of inspecting the damage to the hull, the plates and the remaining bulkheads firsthand. But despite the added advantage of a dry autopsy, the panel concluded—as Sampson's underwater effort had 14 years earlier—that the explosion was external. Vreeland's findings did, however, subsume and occasionally correct the data and inferences of the earlier board.

On March 16, 1912, with the cofferdam opened and the *Maine* cabled to the tugboat *Osceola*, the storied ship began its final trip. If you had returned to your seat at Dos Hermanos, you would have had a ringside view. Beginning at sunrise, a cannon boomed every half-hour from La Cabaña fortress at the entrance to the harbor. Coffins carrying the remains of the newly found sailors were loaded onto the USS *North Carolina*, in town to bring the bones back to Washington and, with the USS *Birmingham*, escort the *Maine* on its final journey to sea. At 2:30 P.M., the seaward procession began. The hulk of the *Maine*, roses covering what remained of her deck, was towed in front of an estimated 80,000 habaneros, past private yachts and out into the Gulf of Mexico. Beyond the three-mile limit, the *Osceola* drifted to a halt and a crew boarded the *Maine* to prepare it for burial. Johnny O'Brien, a local port captain who had achieved renown for his role as a filibusterer during the insurrection against Spain, was the last to leave the sinking ship. "Some thought that the *Maine* appeared to struggle against her fate," he later wrote, "but to my mind there was not only no suggestion of a struggle but in no way could she have met a sweeter or more peaceful end."

But the story of the *Maine* did not end here. Although its fate came to represent our entry into the Spanish-American War, it has become clear to historians that had the *Maine* not exploded, some other reason would have catapulted us into the struggle for supremacy in Cuba.

Over the years, a succession of Cuban governments paid tribute to the victims of the *Maine*. In early 1925, during the closing months of President Alfredo Zayas' administration, Cuba dedicated a monument to those who died. It consisted of two tall marble columns with an American eagle perched on top. At the base was a plaque listing the dead. Gen. John J. Pershing, then 65, spoke at the ceremony. A year and a half later a vicious hurricane blew through Havana with winds of more than 100 miles an hour. It sank boats, brought about the deaths of some 400 Cubans—and destroyed the *Maine* monument. A new eagle was sculpted, this one more aerodynamic, and a new monument went up.

Cuba became a convenient land for foreigners to invest and vacation in, and Americans did plenty of both. One year into Franklin Roosevelt's first administration, in a curious series of communications that involved FDR, his ambassador to Spain and the U.S. Naval Academy, the United States acknowledged that no proof existed that the Spanish blew up the *Maine*. In those days, Cuba celebrated "Maine Day" every February, and the U.S. ambassador

would "hold forth at great length," according to a 1941 guidebook, "about the close ties that bind the two republics." Meanwhile, Dos Hermanos held its own as a popular watering hole. Foreigners such as Isadora Duncan and Federico García Lorca visited, and one could always find a lively mix of businessmen, artists, politicians, sailors and prostitutes drinking downstairs or eating at its rooftop dining room. As for Charles Sigsbee—"the Captain" to the public, "Foxy" to his family—he lived to 78, believing to the end that a mine blew up his ship. (His descendants, eligible for plaques from melted-down *Maine* bronze, have recently petitioned the Navy for 11 to be distributed among the current generations of his family.)

That would wrap up the *Maine* story were it not for two men of enormous ego, both bruised by the American military establishment—Cuban president Fidel Castro and Adm. Hyman Rickover of the U.S. Navy. In the closing weeks of the Eisenhower administration, just after the United States broke off relations with Cuba, the Cuban Council of Ministers called for the "imperialist eagle with all its tragic symbolism, vassalage, and exploitation" to be taken down from atop the *Maine* monument. A new inscription would go up, dedicated "To the Victims of the *Maine*, Sacrificed for Voracious American Imperialism in its Efforts to Take Control of Cuba."

The night of May 1, 1961, two weeks after beating back a U.S.-sponsored invasion at the Bay of Pigs, the Castro government sent a crane out to topple the *Maine* monument eagle. But the eagle was a tough old bird and clung tenaciously to its perch. After a night of huffing and puffing, the crane had dislodged only half of the bird. The next day it managed to get the rest of the eagle; but before the bird could be hauled away, someone made off with its head. Both halves of the body are now on display at Havana's Museum of the City, in the same building where the *Maine* dead lay in state in 1898. As for the eagle's head, it is mounted on the wall of the snack bar at the U.S. Interests Section—our unofficial embassy in Havana.

The ill-fated warship's mainmast rises above the burial site for *Maine* crewmen at Arlington National Cemetery; the cannon was captured from Spain.

In Washington, Hyman Rickover, assuming the broad authority vested in a Navy admiral, took it upon himself in the 1970s to reinvestigate the *Maine* explosion. He had become intrigued with the ship's fate after reading a newspaper article on the subject and gathered together a panel of first-rate historians and engineers. After an exhaustive investigation and reexamination of the evidence, the team reached a definitive conclusion: the *Maine*'s death was self-inflicted. This unintentional suicide was likely the result of a coal bunker fire, they found, but whatever its cause, it was absolutely clear that an external force—a mine or torpedo—was not responsible. When the 1976 Rickover report was rereleased in 1995, principals from the original team affirmed their earlier conclusion and added more supporting evidence. There are still some who take issue with that conclusion, maintaining that an external blast was to blame. The plausibility of that and other explanations, cobbled together by a fact here, an assumption there, keeps the ultimate truth of how the *Maine* blew up elusive.

Within Cuba today two schools of thought about the *Maine* circulate. The first is widespread and almost entirely wrong. A ninth-grade history text says the *Maine* arrived "on the pretext of a friendly mission . . . but the reality was something else—the presence of the boat formed part of a vast plan of warfare." *Granma International*, a weekly newspaper published by the country's Communist Party, has spoken of the *Maine* as a "U.S. warship exploded by the United States . . . in order to create a motive for intervention" and of "260 sailors, the majority of them black" who died "while the officers, all white, were safe on shore." Writers and building guards and dozens of others along Havana's seaside boulevard and elsewhere solemnly assured me of this. It is Cuba's conventional wisdom. The fact is, only 22 of the victims were black. As for the 26 officers, all but four were aboard.

The other, little-circulated but more knowledgeable point of view was articulated by Comdr. Gustavo Placer, a retired naval officer who taught at Cuba's Academy of

the Armed Forces. Placer, a military historian in his 50s, joined me for a slow, strong coffee at Dos Hermanos, where a clear view of the *Maine*'s position is now obscured by an enormous waterfront building. "Could it have been the Spanish?" he asked rhetorically. "I rule that out because no one puts mines in their own port. There were military and cargo ships at anchorage and there was no state of war. There was no advance notice the *Maine* was coming, and you must remember, the United States was not Spain's enemy, Cuba was. It would have been suicidal for Spain to plant a mine beneath the *Maine*. Could it have been Cuban insurgents? Well, why? How? They didn't have the technical ability, and they were busy fighting a war of independence. They wanted military aid from the Americans, yes, but not military intervention. Also, the Spanish Navy was all over the place.

"Could the United States have done it? The *Maine* was one of the biggest of its fleet. America was already prepared for war; it did not need a pretext. Could someone have hidden a bomb on board without it being discovered or anyone knowing? That conspiracy is extremely unlikely." Placer spoke like a prosecutor summing up his case. "No one has ever claimed responsibility or motive, from any side," he emphasized. "You notice that Sampson got promoted to admiral soon after he released his investigation. He was evidently rewarded for his conclusion. To call an internal accident an external explosion became the pivotal justification for war. The 1911 inquiry had to reach a similar conclusion or the rationale for the entire war would have sunk." Placer had read the Rickover report and agreed with its conclusions about the cause of the fateful blast.

Leaving Dos Hermanos, the retired commander and I walked through Havana's narrow downtown streets to a shop where I could buy a nautical map of the harbor. I told him about the eagle's head at the U.S. Interests Section and quoted the end of the printed account next to the head: "Let us hope that some day this battered head can be again joined with its body and wings in a gesture of friendship." At this Placer broke his military bearing and let out an ironic laugh. "They just don't understand what the eagle represents, do they?"

When you scrape away all the emotional barnacles from the *Maine*, you're left with a battleship that was in the first generation of steel vessels fired by coal rather than propelled by wind. Design flaws during this transition brought on a number of accidents, including ones involving self-igniting coal.

When I screened film footage of the *Maine* going down for the last time, I turned the knob to change its speed, then reversed history by making the ship, with its enormous American flag, come back out of the water. Tinkering with the *Maine*'s role in history has given it prominence for a hundred years now. And as we enter the second century following the explosion, controversy has not yet abandoned the ship. After the bodies recovered from the *Maine* were buried in Havana, parts still occasionally floated to the harbor's surface. Those remains, largely unidentified, were buried at a Key West, Florida, cemetery. Just last year, on the eve of the centennial, the U.S. government decided to sell off the *Maine* plot, complete with the buried bones. Groups in Key West are protesting this decision. Some people, it seems, just won't let you forget the *Maine*.

Tom Miller has written about the Southwest and Latin America for more than 25 years. His most recent book is Trading with the Enemy: A Yankee Travels Through Castro's Cuba *(Basic Books).*

Some relics from the *Maine* ended up at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Arrayed here are a metal nameboard, the ship's compass, binoculars, a revolver, china, tableware, exercise equipment and the encrusted remains of a bugle.

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REHABILITATING INJURED OR ABANDONED WILDLIFE FULFILLS THE LONGING OF MANY ANIMAL LOVERS TO KNOW OTHER BLOODS

The Joys of Rehabbing

BY BIL GILBERT

AS LINKS IN FOOD CHAINS, SHARERS OF SPACE AND COMpetitors for resources, all animals must become well acquainted with some other ones. But, uniquely, humans hang out with other species even when they don't have to, apparently because this provides a certain amount of psychic satisfaction. In all times and cultures of record, people have formed companionable and compassionate relationships with beasts, demonstrating what has been called biophilia or, more stylishly, the yearning to know other bloods. Whatever the ancient origins of these inclinations, they seem to be intensifying rather than atrophying as the millions of pet keepers, and students, admirers and protectors of wild animals, currently testify.

Having a rather wide circle of zoologically involved acquaintances, I believe that, based on what they do, wildlife rehabilitators are probably the most passionate

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL BALLENBERG

Nancy Eilertsen released this blue heron three weeks after splinting its broken wing.

Whether it's a raccoon (left) or a rabbit, Diana Roché will help. It takes her 20 minutes to give a baby rabbit (above) one of its four daily meals.

biophiliacs. One of them is Christie Huffman. She and her husband, Keith, a Washington, D.C. attorney, live in the Northern Virginia exurbs of that city on a partially wooded five-acre tract. Sharing the house and grounds with them on a full-time basis are two parrots, two dogs, two cats and a horse. The latter is semi-retired, having been on the place since the Huffmans' daughters, both grown and gone, were horsey girls. More numerous, varied and demanding than these permanent residents are the ailing transients who live, or are trying to, in a shelter Christie operates on the premises. She and I became acquainted because we are crow fanciers. We both have permits that allow us to do hands-on work with these birds—hale and hearty ones in my case, distressed ones in hers.

On the June day when we first met, Christie had five crows less than a month old in an outbuilding that serves as a nursery. The fledglings were unrelated but, because of assorted accidents, had been prematurely separated from their parents and nests. Found flightless and hungry on the ground by concerned passersby, they were brought to Christie. They were doing nicely, vigorously squawking and begging to be fed. Hourly throughout the day, Christie popped moistened, vitamin-fortified pellets of puppy food and other nourishment into their gaping mouths. She later told me all five birds were eventually transferred to a large outdoor aviary where they learned to fly and to feed themselves. Then they were released in the yard and hung around there for a few days before drifting off, probably to join flocks of wild crows.

Until the day before I visited, there had been two other infant crows. Both had arrived so crippled by malnutrition and injuries that, after a week of trying, Christie had decided they were beyond rehabilitation and could never fend for themselves. She had taken the birds to a cooperative local veterinarian, who euthanized them.

Also in the nursery at the time was an assortment of other young birds, including seven blue jays, three chimney swifts and a ruby-throated hummingbird. The swifts had been dislodged from their nest by a chimney sweep. This is not an uncommon local occurrence, and Christie generally deals with a dozen or so young swifts during the course of the fledging season each summer. Among other things, she has learned that they eat mealworms more readily if she gently rattles their cage. Presumably this simulates the vibrations produced by parent swifts as they settle on the nest to feed their young. The hummingbird, about the size of an unshelled peanut, was lounging in a warmed incubator box, sipping artificial nectar from a tube.

There were three adult patients. A screech owl that had collided with something, probably a vehicle. It had no apparent external injuries but was groggy and being held for observation and cage rest. A mourning dove had been mauled by a cat and was being treated with antibiotics prescribed by the vet. An understandably morose and ill-tempered turkey vulture was closely confined because of a broken and splinted leg.

Christie said that given the season—which, because of all the hatchings and birthings, is normally as hectic for "rehabbers" as early April is for tax accountants—it was a relatively slow day. As usual, she had spent an hour in the early morning preparing food, formulas and medicines. But all the orphans were eating willingly. Generally she had more intensive-care patients, including some that had to be force-fed. So she had done some things that she had been putting off: repairing spare cages, going to the feed store, reading an article in an ornithological journal about owls, working on one she was writing about crows for the newsletter of the Wildlife Rescue League, a Northern Virginia organization to which she belongs.

I asked her what she did in her spare time. "Unless there is a big crisis I walk the dogs every afternoon, more for me than them. It gives me a chance to get out of here and think about other things, grandchildren for example. But I don't want to sound like a whiny, self-righteous martyr. Nobody makes me do this. It is a joy, a big one in my life. I'm grateful I can take care of baby crows, jays and the rest. Whether they make it may not be important ecologically, but it is important for me."

I grew up in a family of what was once described as animalholics. During my childhood, my parents, sister and I rescued, fed and patched up many of the birds, mammals, snakes and turtles commonly found in southern Michigan. Included was a black bear cub who, after its mother had been illegally killed, was brought as a bottle baby to my father. The cub shared the house and yard with us until the next winter, when it began tearing up furniture for bedding and was sent to a zoo. Later this bear and the general zoological enthusiasms of my family became the subject of my first book.

Today only those who have appropriate state and federal permits can legally hold any sort of native wildlife for rehabilitation or other purposes. Such permits are, a bit paradoxically, much more difficult to obtain than hunting

A juvenile opossum receives an injection to correct dehydration upon arrival at the home of Linda Gray (right), who specializes in opossums.

and trapping licenses. Requirements vary somewhat between jurisdictions, but a would-be rehabber might have to serve an apprenticeship, pass a written examination, provide facilities that public authorities deem suitable and pay a fee. Thereafter permit holders must submit detailed annual reports describing each animal they have treated. None of the creatures, no matter how endearing, can be kept as pets or permanent invalids. Those that cannot eventually be released must either be destroyed or, under a separate permit, be used for educational purposes by the rehabilitator, a zoo or a nature center.

Strictly and mindlessly applied, these regulations sometimes seem absurd, as when an overzealous game warden makes a criminal case of a family innocently raising a foundling crow. But generally they have evolved for rational and humane reasons, reflecting changes for the better, I think, in our zoological sensibilities. Not infrequently, in the good old days, people who tried to care for wild animals lacked the experience and patience to do so compassionately, with cruel results. Also, there were those who maimed and orphaned creatures to keep or sell them as pets, roadside attractions, lures and targets.

Considering what is required to become one, there are a surprising number of legal wildlife rehabbers. Any of them who hold migratory birds, which includes most nondomesticated avian species, must be licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently there are some 3,500 of these federal permits. It is estimated by the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, a private Minnesota-based organization, that an equal number of permits to treat nonmigratory species have been issued by the states. Many rehabbers have both federal and state permits, and some permits cover more than one rehabber. Then there are perhaps 30,000 to 50,000 people who are not licensed but work with those who are. For example, in the Wildlife Rescue League to which Christie Huffman belongs, there are 60 registered rehabbers and about 150 volunteers, who help with the care and release of animals, pick up new patients, answer telephones and do other chores. Throughout the country, there are more than a hundred similar groups organized by rehabbers to spread out their caseloads, train apprentices and raise community support for cooperative clinics and shelters.

Whatever their exact number, rehabbers are proliferating. Their national association was founded with a handful of members in 1982; it now has 1,771. Patrick Martin, a wildlife biologist employed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to work with rehabbers, says there are presently 760 certified rehabbers in the state as compared with about 150 in 1985. According to a 1990 survey of more than 400 New York practitioners, 68 percent were women. The previous year they collectively cared for 13,000 wild animals. Most did so at home. The remainder were associated with veterinarians or cooperative clinics. They spent from a few hundred to several thousand dollars a year on their rehab work. Some were helped with donations from the public, but none were (or by New York law can be) directly paid for what they did. Virtually all said their principal purpose was to relieve pain and suffering, that beyond doing so they were rewarded by becoming more knowledgeable about and intimately acquainted with native animals.

In conventional conservation terms, the work of rehabbers has little significance, and few of them claim otherwise. Their patients are generally abundant creatures, and there is almost no data about how many of them are successfully reestablished in the wild. Nevertheless, for reasons of vocational self-interest, public wildlife officials now tend to think much better of these private caregivers than they once did. "Agencies such as ours," says Patrick Martin, "are set up to manage entire species, but increasingly members of the public are concerned about the welfare of individual animals. If they find one who seems to need help, they want somebody to do something. I'd guess that 75 percent of the time orphans, or what people think are orphans, are involved. Basically they need a lot of patient, time-consuming care. In most cases we don't have the personnel or facilities to give it, nor, usually, do veterinarians or humane societies.

"If our officers come across somebody trying to take care of a wild animal, they are required by law to seize it. It used to be that if the animal couldn't be safely released, it was often destroyed, because there was nobody who could or would legally hold it. When this happened the agency was apt to get hammered for being stupid and cruel. Rehabbers give animals and us a better option."

Based on conversations I've had with several hundred of them, it seems rehabbers most often become such serendipitously. Two of them now work mainly with birds in Oregon and Pennsylvania, but both had their first caregiving experiences with mammals—such odd ones that neither wants to be identified for fear strangers will regard them as kooks. Call them Sally and Judy.

Sally once lived in New York City and was employed

This young female opossum ended up at Gray's after it was found in a residential recycling container. Gray deflead it and put an iron solution in its food to treat its anemia.

by a Wall Street brokerage firm. One day she found a displaced nest of infant house mice she could not bear to let die. They responded well to care, but Sally was a single woman and had nobody to leave them with during the day. So for their first week she carried the tiny creatures to the office in her brassiere. She took them out and fed them surreptitiously during breaks and on her lunch hour.

One spring day Judy's husband—"Tom" will do for him—was canoeing on the flood-swollen Susquehanna River. There he found a week-old beaver that had apparently washed downstream from a nest or lodge destroyed by high water. Thinking it would die of exposure or be eaten by a mink or raccoon, Tom took the little animal home. The kit could or would not drink formula from an eyedropper or rubber nipple, but eagerly accepted Judy, who was then nursing the couple's three-month-old daughter. Judy continued to suckle the foundling until it was able to eat minced fruits and vegetables.

Most commonly the rehabbers I've talked to got started by trying to care for animals brought to them by children. In addition to raising two sons and a daughter, Diana Roché, before retiring in 1996, was for 31 years an elementary teacher and librarian in Tucson, Arizona. For the past seven years, she and her husband, Barry, a hearing-aid salesman and former police officer, have lived 30 miles south of the city on a property in the open Sonoran Desert where they keep horses, a pig, an emu and lesser domestic stock. These animals require routine healthcare, but

As a foundling, this adult barred owl became so dependent on Barbara Cole, it would not survive if released.

Roché was inspired to become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator by an incident that occurred at school: her second-grade pupils found a dying young European starling on the playground.

"The little bird was cold, could scarcely move and was already covered with red ants," she recalls. "I told the children it would probably die. But they were so concerned, I brushed off the ants, warmed it under a lamp, opened its beak and got it to swallow some water and food." The fledgling, named Peepers, lived and became a fixture at the school for the next four years, enthralling and edifying Roché's students. "More so than any book or film could, Peepers got them interested in wild animals, their habitats and the environment generally."

On weekends and when school was not in session, Peepers stayed in the Rochés' outdoor aviary but otherwise lived in the classroom—in a cage that had to be padlocked because he soon learned to open ordinary latches. So he could stretch his wings, and to reward the class for good behavior, the starling frequently was freed to fly about the room. He perched on the students' desks and heads; played tag and tug-of-war with papers, pencils; and bathed in a sink and had his feathers fluffed with a blow-dryer. Like parrots and crows, starlings are very able and inclined to mimic sounds made by other creatures, including humans. Peepers first learned to imitate Roché's laugh, a distinctive one, and then to "say" in a small but clear voice such things as "Poor baby," "Gimme kiss," "Wake up" and "Take out the trash."

As an aside: beyond being, by our standards, exceptionally intelligent and entertaining, European starlings are adaptable, hardy and easy to raise. They therefore are often recommended to would-be rehabbers as starter animals. Legally this is permissible since, like some pigeons and English sparrows, European starlings are considered trashy immigrants by wildlife authorities and therefore are not subject to the regulations that apply to native species.

One day, Peepers developed the sniffles. Roché treated him with a medication sold in pet shops for birds with respiratory infections, but he died. "It was awful," says Roché. "The children had never seen me cry, but I did, and they did, off and on for the next few days. I kept thinking that it wouldn't have happened if I had done something different. I decided if I was going to work with animals I had to learn to do it right. So I began as an apprentice and then got my permits."

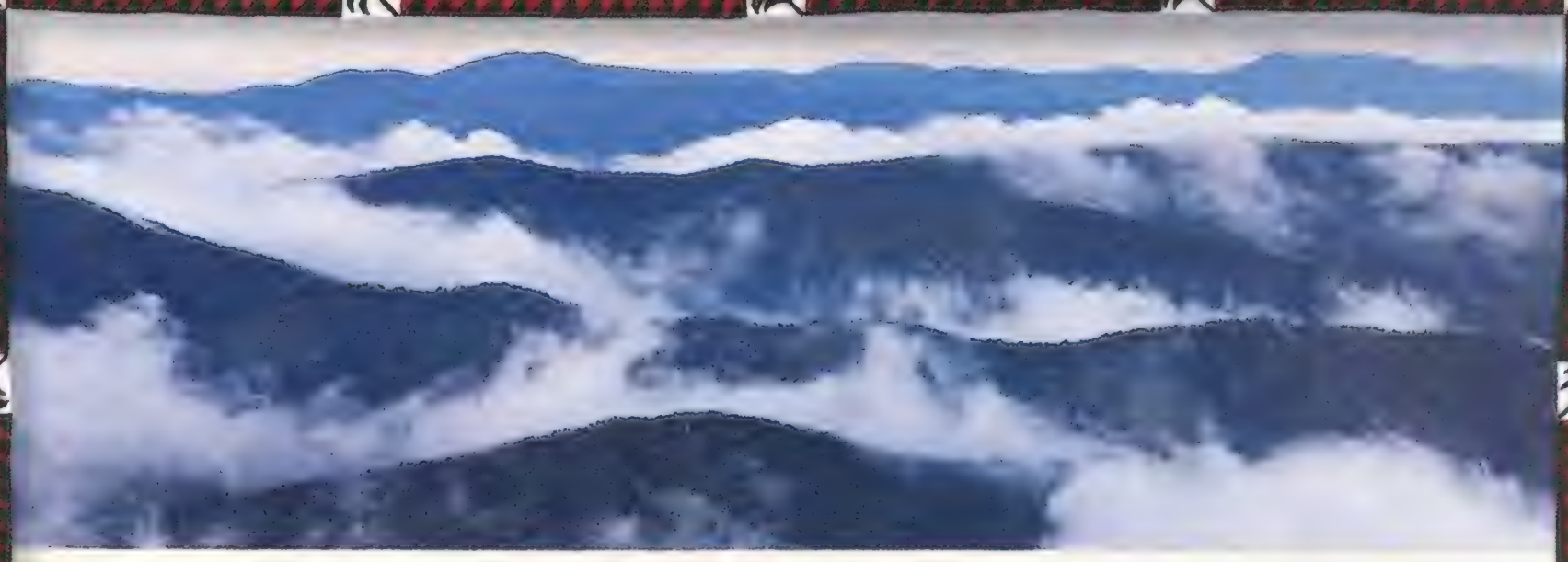
Last year Roché cared for nearly 600 creatures at her desert home. Rabbits that have been hit by cars or mauled by cats and dogs are among her most common and time-consuming patients; rabbits tend to spook and be finicky eaters. She also rehabilitates injured roadrunners, which pose a special problem. As a last defense, when cornered or handled, they emit accurately aimed jets of excrement.

Roché takes in a variety of animals, but many other rehabbers are specialists. This means they have the inclination and facilities for working with only a few or a single species: waterfowl, birds of prey, ravens, javelinas, coyotes, deer, among others. Linda Gray cares exclusively for opossums at her home in Orange County, California. There were no wild opossums in and around Los Angeles until the early part of this century, when several pairs were released there to enhance the native fauna. Since then, they have proliferated wildly.

A few weeks after conception, opossums produce large litters, sometimes of a dozen or more offspring. As with other marsupials, the young emerge from the womb as bee-size, embryo-like creatures able only to wriggle their way into their mother's pouch. There they find a teat and remain firmly affixed to it for some eight weeks. After emerging from the pouch, they spend a few more weeks clinging to the female and then, being of a solitary species, drop off and go their separate ways.

Each spring, Gray and four volunteers care for 70 to 80 infant opossums, most of which have prematurely dropped off the mother, or are found in the pouches of females maimed or killed by motor vehicles or dogs. If the little ones weigh less than 30 grams—a little more than an ounce, or about the weight of a mouse—they have to be fed five or six times a day with a milk-substitute formula, which is delivered through a flexible tube inserted directly down their throats. Youngsters weighing more than 30 grams are coaxed to eat prematurely by themselves, first a gruel of formula and kitten food, then more solid fare. Opossums are spectacularly omnivorous creatures, eating more or less anything that does not eat them, but Gray has found that her young ones particularly enjoy snails which, by design, are numerous in her home garden.

When they are seven to nine inches long, Gray's young opossums are released in backyards of cooperative people where they do not have to cope with traffic, dogs or unsympathetic humans during their first days of freedom.



THEY SAY NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION. UP HERE, IT WAS THE MOTHER OF ART.

A lonesome cabin somewhere high in a forgotten cove. No electricity or running water; no neighbor in sight. Cut off from all outside contact by impassable roads. The only sound to keep you company: the winter wind howling through the pines.

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River cane was gathered from the creek bottoms and woven into ornate baskets. Homely corn shucks were fashioned into delicate dolls. And with the help of a pen knife, blocks of oak and pine were soon made to sing the sublime songs of the mountain dulcimer.

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Christie Huffman holds a pileated woodpecker she is treating for malnutrition. Many of the "orphaned" birds she receives would, if left alone, have been rescued by their own parents.

Such places are becoming increasingly scarce in the Los Angeles area. They are Gray's preferred release sites. "Opossums are city animals, part of this environment," she says. "And the law requires me to release them within a half-mile of where they were found."

Working at the other end of the size-and-behavior spectrum from opossums, Barbara Cole specializes in taking care of deer. She has two 40-by-40-foot deer paddocks on her semirural property near Binghamton, New York. She accepts only fawns since there is little that can be done for a seriously injured adult deer except to have it put down by an animal-control warden. The fawns are brought to Cole for one of two reasons. Some are true orphans whose mothers have been injured or killed. Others are false orphans found by well-intentioned people who mistakenly think they have been abandoned. When Cole gets a call about a fawn, she tells the caller to leave the animal alone. "If it is still there the next day, it may be a true orphan, but the doe will probably return before then. And don't mother it, because fawns get socialized very easily."

During their first days or weeks, many animals will bond strongly with—become "imprinted" on—whoever or whatever feeds or fondles them. The great ethologist Konrad Lorenz discovered that if he introduced himself to goslings as they were emerging from eggs, they would thereafter follow him and other people in preference to adult geese. This is a concern for most rehabbers. Imprinted creatures are appealing and easy to rear but often cause problems after they are released. I know of one crow that alighted on a picnic table, gobbled up the astonished occupants' potato salad and flew off with a spoon. Imprinted deer are apt to be destructive, wasting gardens and shrubs, and can even be dangerous. *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings dramatizes the downside of raising a fawn.

To minimize imprinting, Cole holds the ten or so fawns she accepts each year in a stockade-type enclosure where they seldom see her or other people. Inside is a facsimile of an adult deer, to which is attached a rack of nursing bottles, and a real white-tailed doe that came to Cole irreversibly imprinted by the people who found it. "She is too messed up to ever be released," Cole says, "but she accustoms the fawns to being around an adult and models some of the feeding, alarm and social behaviors for them."

While most deer rehabbers release orphaned fawns in the fall of their first year, Cole believes the animals' chances of survival are better if they don't have to cope alone with winter weather, food scarcity and competition from wild deer. Therefore she holds hers until spring and frees them in state forest lands adjacent to her property. As is the case with most rehabbers, she does not have the resources or authority to keep track of them after they are released. She has freed several yearlings with unusual identifying marks and asked local hunters to be on the lookout for them. Thus far they have not been reported.

There are those who question the appropriateness of what rehabilitators do. Cole spends thousands of dollars a year on what she calls her "rehab habit." Does it make sense to invest that kind of money to "save" deer and other animals that are overpopulating many parts of the country to the point where they are pests?

Rehabbers resent having to explain themselves. The inference, many of them feel, is that, unlike people who spend a lot of time and money playing golf, restoring antiques or hunting deer, they are a bit loony. A stock brush-off is the one used by Vivian Steele of Santa Fe, New Mexico. She got started because her children brought her a fallen nest of sparrows. "I just tell people," says Steele, "that I don't like to see animals, especially baby ones, hurting, so I try to help them."

Sometimes rehabbers are on the receiving end of help. Last year Nancy Eilertsen was keeping some orphaned grackles on the patio of her suburban Phoenix home. One day a wild female grackle wedged herself under a loose screen and started feeding and educating the fledglings, which she continued to do for several weeks. "It was like having an expert au pair," says Eilertsen. "I just turned the babies over to her." Eventually that bird raised 22 young grackles who, when released, knew how to behave as one of their kind should.

Bil Gilbert wrote on Ernest Thompson Seton in July 1997. The most exotic animal Bill Ballenberg spends time with is his terrier, Sandy.

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BOXES

BY STANLEY CRAWFORD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAÚL COLÓN

WHEN YOU WORK ON A SMALL farm, you think a lot about boxes. You think about sizes, shapes, materials, stackability, cost. About waxed and unwaxed cardboard, wired wooden slats, pressboard ends, paper-covered slats, depth, width and the solidness of the bottom. You even develop a moral order of boxes, in which there are perfect boxes, good boxes, bad boxes and totally useless boxes. There are active boxes, which go through endless cycles of being filled and then emptied, and there are inactive boxes, which end up in a dark corner of the shed filled with some category of object you don't know whether to keep or throw away.

You become a collector of boxes. You scavenge them, you hoard them. You can weave a rich structure of resentment around someone who forgets to return a favored box you were foolish enough to lend. As you enter your shed or barn in the winter, you may wonder, "Where did all these boxes come from?" Or, at the other extreme, at the height of the season, "Where did all my boxes go?" When your boxes are all empty, you have too many. But when they are all full, you don't have enough.

I began farming with my wife, Rosemary, in the early 1970s. We weren't sure whether our garden had got out of control or whether we had a small truck farm serving farmers' markets and a few restaurants in Santa Fe and Taos. In any case, we needed boxes.

Coincidentally, it was a time when solidly built wooden bushel boxes were being phased out by local apple growers in favor of lighter-weight baskets of wired slats for picking, and dressy, white corrugated-cardboard boxes for shipping.

We bought 150 of these old wooden boxes at a dollar apiece and less. I have heard them called palmer boxes. Many bore still-bright lithographed labels from the Yakima Valley in Washington, the Okanagan Lake region in British Columbia and other fruit-producing areas in the Pacific Northwest: Blue Goose, Trout, Snow Owl, Golden Rod, Big Chief. In these intervening 25 years, all but a couple of those labels have faded away and slaked off.

The boxes were already of some antiquity when we acquired them. They were probably shipped into northern New Mexico with their cargo of apples in the 1950s or perhaps

even the 1940s. Local fruit growers would have used them briefly once a year to pick and transport their apples up into Colorado or down into southern New Mexico and West Texas, tipping the fruit out into sacks or cardboard boxes for roadside or door-to-door sales. Most of the year the boxes would remain stacked out of the weather in barns and sheds. They are so designed that, in stacking, two empty boxes, like opposing halves of a clam, can enclose a third. Most of the boxes we bought were in very good condition. Some had the names of their second-generation owners—many of them descendants of Spanish colonizers, proprietors of orchards of 10 or 20 acres at most—stenciled or stamped or scrawled on the sides: Montoya, Roybal, Martinez.

Their eccentric-seeming dimensions probably record some aspect of box-making tied to ancient traditions of lumber sizing. And they were made in the days when nobody thought twice about using 12-inch boards for boxes ultimately destined to be thrown away—the days of seemingly inexhaustible Northwest old-growth timber. The box ends, for example, are heavy $^{3}/_{4}$-inch pine stock, $12^{1}/_{4}$ inches wide and $10^{7}/_{8}$ inches high. Often these are of one piece, though more commonly they are of two or three pieces butted together with corrugated steel fasteners. The side panels may be one piece, or two or three fitted together with a shallow tongue-and-groove cut. The two or three bottom slats are stapled to the thick end panels and then further held in place by nailed-on cleats, which help center the boxes on top of each other and reduce sliding on flat surfaces. Originally, the boxes would have had top slats as well.

Fully loaded, the boxes can weigh up to 60 pounds. You can stack them as high as you can reach. For the farmers' markets, I load the pickup bed with a layer of boxes filled to the top with fresh onions, lettuce, arugula, spinach, beets, squash and basil. Then on top of them I lay down two heavy plywood planks that serve for our counter at the market. On top of them I slide in another layer of boxes. On top of them I lay down various other planks that also serve for our display. On top of them go shallower trays of fruit, garlic and shallots, and bushel baskets of flowers.

Thus stacked, everything sits for the night, camper shell windows open for coolness, waiting for the 50-mile drive at dawn to Santa Fe or Los Alamos. Once we arrive there and have unloaded the produce onto the countertops, the boxes, upended, serve as stands for the planks, hold paper and plastic sacks, and raise up the cashbox on the tailgate to a more convenient height.

In the old days when we were selling fresh produce to Santa Fe restaurants, we used to leave the boxes and pick them up at the next delivery—at least until kitchen staff people began filching them. Each year a box or two disintegrated beyond repair, with ends, sides, bottom, all splitting at once. At first, when apple growers were still cleaning these boxes out of their barns, the losses seemed unimportant. Later, the boxes became rare. Now they are irreplaceable.

A few years ago I painted a half-dozen boxes a clear blue to help dress up the market stand. I coated quite a few others with linseed oil to slow their decay. The dry foothill climate of northern New Mexico is merciful to wood as long as it receives minimal protection of almost any kind. And every other year or so I put various young workers to renailing the boxes that had become wobbly with use—only to discover, at the height of the season, that these repairs often lacked the necessary sensitivity about rough edges, protruding nails and other details.

Recently I began to look at my apple boxes through new eyes. I came to appreciate them as objects of unquestioned utility—even to treasure them for their simple elegance of a sort that will never again appear in a manufactured object of wood.

They have come to assume a central role in the life of our little farm. They serve for picking, packing, storage, sorting and even as temporary work stands in that sometimes shady, sometimes sunny area in the angle of our two garlic sheds. Rosemary and I, and those who work for us, move them in and out of the sheds each workday, carry them down to the fields and back, and load them in and out of the pickups and tractor loader again and again over the course of the week, the month, the season, from June to November. In the winter I stack them in the back of the shed out of the weather.

Our boxes are part of the way we walk, bend over, lift things. They are the source of most of the splinters we pull out of our fingers. They may even be the origin of many of the nails the tire-repairers have pulled out of our tires over the years. They have become part of the basic character of the farm, an element of shared habits and gestures that make up a small node of the culture of work of a place.

They are also the source of a farm taboo. All of our longtime farmworkers, including our grown children, know the first signs. A visitor arrives at the garlic shed. He sees an empty wooden apple box lying on the ground or standing upended at a convenient sitting height. He bends down and draws it near. And at least two of us, as if by a premeditated signal, will call out, "Please don't sit on the boxes." And a chair will be offered instead, or an upended plastic tub, or an old wire dairy crate.

Our visitor will no doubt think us a little mad, not knowing or caring that when you sit on the boxes and begin shifting your weight in the manner of sitting humans, you start springing all the nails.

And that is no way to treat a venerable friend of the farm of 25 years.

The August before last I became serious about repairing and painting my apple boxes. Perhaps it was the approach of old age—in myself. I had become again painfully aware of how much we all waste in material goods, in packaging, in gadgets and knickknacks, in clothing and vehicles, in all those things we discard hastily after too much neglect, objects that would be cared for and even highly valued in much of the poorer world, where they would be thrown away only after having been completely worn out.

In the past I did emergency repairs, just enough to keep a box operational for the season. But now I decided I would look a box over carefully and then do everything necessary to restore it to the best possible condition. All inevitably needed refastening, a matter of pulling out loose nails and renailing sides and bottom with cement-coated nails—without splitting the still strong but brittle wood. Badly split sides, ends and bottoms could be backed or replaced with odds and ends from the scrap-wood collection, notably the $^{3}/_{4}$-inch plywood left over from household projects and various bundles of flat molding picked up at flea markets. I soon discovered that there was virtually no box too far gone to restore. I could repair 10 to 15 in a couple of hours in the afternoon—at a time when I was usually tired of field work.

But the real pleasure came in repainting them, some bright blue, some turquoise, which sealed the wood against the weather and acted as a kind of glue at the joints, and even reduced the risk of splinters. With the boxes dressed up in their new colors, we'll perhaps be inspired to take better care of them and make sure that none get left in the bushes at the end of a row down in the field or out in the weather all winter long.

With the help of these repairs, and with luck, the boxes could go another 20 years, maybe longer, perhaps almost forever. As I worked away through the August afternoons in the shade of a maple tree in the center of the drive, such thoughts gave me great comfort.

Stanley Crawford is the author of The Garlic Testament. *Illustrator Raúl Colón, a city dweller, used to collect fruit box labels.*

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Books, Books, Books, My Lord!

BY ROBERT WERNICK

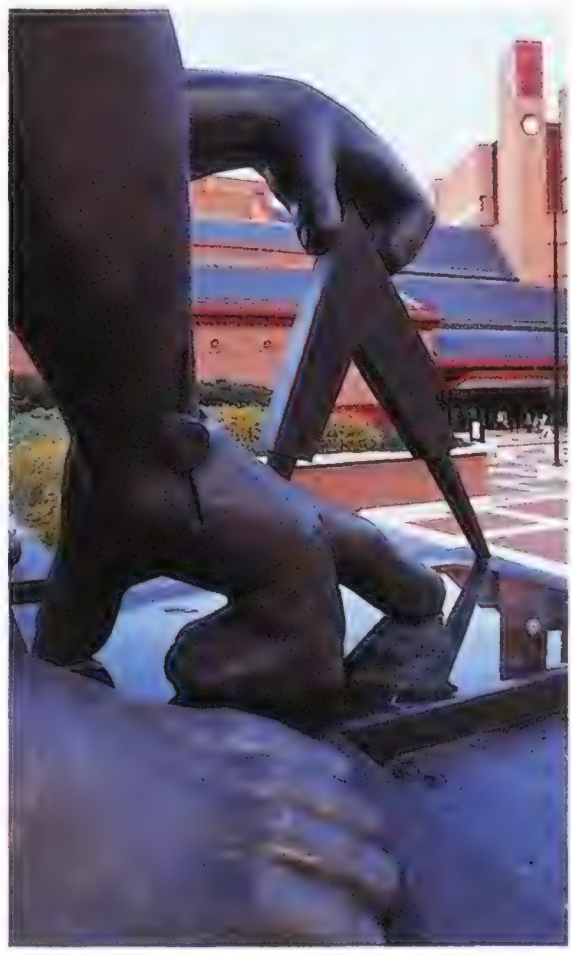
"THEY ARE TEARING THE HEART OUT OF THE NATION," says an elderly gentleman, pointing an indignant finger at a truck barreling down Great Russell Street. "They are moving the books from the Reading Room, and all they know to do with them is bury them in a potato field."

This was England. No need to ask what room he was referring to. For scholars like him who had grown gray under the blue-and-gold dome conceived by an Italian revolutionary almost a century and a half ago, the center of England's, and thus the world's, learning was the Reading Room of the British Museum. Like Lord Macaulay and Browning, Darwin had taken notes in the British Museum. So had Dickens, who told his biographer that his days there were the most useful he had ever passed. It was there, too, that Peter Roget did research before publishing the thesaurus on which writers at a loss for a word or phrase depend to this day.

Marx himself sat in the great Reading Room almost every day for 20 years (when he was not earning a meager living by writing articles for a New York newspaper), searching out proof that the capitalist system was bound to self-destruct in the near future. There visionary revolutionaries came to acquire the intellectual background necessary for overturning ancient empires or for blowing up the world: Mohandas Gandhi, creator of modern India, then a budding lawyer; Sun Yat-sen, father of the Chinese republic, then a young doctor; the Russian anarchist Prince Pyotr Alekseyevich Kropotkin, whose disciples were murdering kings and presidents and prime ministers all over the globe around the turn of the century; V. I. Ulyanov, even then a fulminator against the czar, who had changed his name to Lenin but was calling himself Jacob Richter, LL.D. When Ezra Pound (SMITHSON-

AFTER 140 TRIUMPHANT YEARS AS CULTURAL ICON, AND 35 YEARS OF FUSS, THE READING ROOM OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM IS NOW OPEN AT A NEW ADDRESS

Under its stately dome, the old Reading Room had book-lined walls and service shelves in concentric circles. Left: A library employee clears a tier of bookshelves preparatory to the move.



IAN, December 1995) wanted to launch a revolutionary movement in 20th-century poetry, he did it over tea and crumpets in the museum's bun room down the hall.

Kipling and Hardy were regulars. Yeats studied Irish mythology there; Isadora Duncan looked into the influence of Greek art on the dance. George Bernard Shaw spent day after day there, and was once seen reading both Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* and the orchestral score of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. He was so grateful that in his will he left the British Museum something like a third of his residual estate, with the result that many an acquisition or exhibition there came to be paid for with the flow of royalties from *My Fair Lady*.

And now this shrine of human knowledge, with all its accumulated traditions and memories, was being stripped of its unique treasure, the miles and miles of books in the stacks surrounding it, to be moved from quiet leafy Bloomsbury, where no one was ever afraid of Virginia Woolf, to Somers Town, a totally different rough-and-tumble London, reputedly a den of thieves and criminals in the 19th century and, according to local taxi drivers, no different now. The books are now being housed across the street from the St. Pancras railway station; a third of them are there already, the rest to be in place by 1999. The building, which is formally called the British Library at St. Pancras, has been the center of a storm of controversy for 35 years.

The Prince of Wales, who laid the foundation stone of the new building in 1982, described the structure as a "dim collection of brick sheds" that looked more like an "academy for secret police" than a library. It has also been compared to a public lavatory. The National Heritage Committee flatly called it "one of the ugliest buildings in the world . . . a Babylonian ziggurat seen through a funfair distorting mirror."

It is easy to understand the deep emotional attachment to the inherited memories of legions of scholars, writers and bibliophiles. It was E. M. Forster who wrote the most memorable love letter to it, in *The Longest Journey*, using the reflections of one of his characters as his vehicle. "In that book-encircled space," it begins, "he always could find peace. He loved to see the volumes rising tier above tier into the misty dome. He loved the chairs that glide so noiselessly, and the radiating desks, and the central area, where the catalogue shelves curve round the superintendent's throne. There he knew that his life was not ignoble. It was worth while to grow old and dusty seeking for truth though truth is unattainable, restating questions that have been stated at the beginning of the world." Working in the Reading Room, a modern scholar explained to me, you felt as if you were in a medieval scriptorium, surrounded by busy pens just like yours. If you looked around from your desk all you could see was books, the walls lined with them up to a height of 40 feet; even the columns holding up the dome are painted with false shelves and false book covers to give the impression of an endless circle of knowledge.

In the old Reading Room the light of heaven flowed down upon rows of desks radiating like the spokes of a wheel, through majestic windows and a huge glass lantern at the top of the dome. If not quite the heart of the nation, it was certainly one of its proudest symbols, as central to the world's intellectual life as the Observatory at Greenwich a few miles away is to the measurement of time and the earth's surface. And all the more central and imposing because, like the Holy of Holies in the old Temple of Jerusalem, very few people ever saw it. Of the six million visitors who pour every year through the great gates and up into the entrance hall of the British Museum—at peak hours it comes within a few percentage points of being as crowded as Heathrow Airport—only a handful have ever stopped to get a glimpse down a short passage where uniformed guards stood by, checking the passes of the happy few allowed in (less than 10 percent of the museum's total visitors).

Passes only went to people recognized as being engaged in work that really requires access to a collection containing so many millions of books and documents. Applicants

Left: The well-lighted, multilevel humanities room is one of 11 reading rooms in the new library. Above: Architect Colin St. John Wilson (top) began work on the project in 1962; the courtyard features a monumental sculpture of Isaac Newton using dividers.

During its construction the new building, seen here against the towers of St. Pancras Station, was sneered at by Prince Charles as a "dim collection of brick sheds" resembling an "academy for secret police." But Londoners now are getting used to it.

merely looking up some references for a term paper or trying to trace their own genealogy were likely to be politely directed elsewhere to one of the excellent libraries scattered throughout the London area.

At least that is the way it has been in modern times, since scholarship became a mass-production industry. The men who voted in Parliament in 1753 for the creation of the British Museum found it perfectly natural to provide for admission, without charge, for "studious and curious persons." In 1810 the rules were adjusted to permit all "persons of decent appearance" to wander freely on the premises. Indeed, they found it perfectly natural to assume that a digest of all the achievements of God and man could be packed into a single house on Great Russell Street.

Standards were not as strict as they are now. What the founders of the British Museum offered the public as a compendium of knowledge looks to our modern critical classificatory eyes like a helter-skelter assortment. The bulk of what early visitors came to see was the collection of some 79,000 objects willed to the nation by Dr. Hans Sloane, the best-known physician of the day and a pioneer of inoculation against smallpox. It included all sorts of exotic plants, fossils, antique statues, stuffed animals, King William and Queen Mary carved in walnut shells, a primitive electrical apparatus, a landscape painted on a spiderweb, a brick from the foundations of the Tower of Babel, a chicken with two heads.

A single room on the ground floor of the house became the museum's first reading room. Equipped with a table surrounded by 20 chairs and by cases of stuffed birds, it allowed visitors access to some 50,000 books in addition to manuscripts, maps and prints. Narrow, dark, cold and damp, it at first attracted fewer than ten readers a day. One was Thomas Gray, author of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," who came to feed his melancholic soul on the "stillness and solitude" of the place. In later reading rooms, visitors included peaceable lunatics whose relatives parked them at the desks so that they could brood their days away.

This was the century of the Enlightenment, however, and soon an increasingly literate and well-educated public was demanding more than a cabinet of curiosities and a heap of miscellaneous books. The public might turn out in greater numbers for the first stuffed polar bears to arrive from the Arctic than for the marble sculptures snatched from the Parthenon in Athens by Lord Elgin, and probably saved from destruction through decay and neglect (SMITHSONIAN, December 1992), but the museum was becoming more serious as it became bigger, and more and more objects flowed in from the ends of the earth. They included manuscripts from the library of King Ashurbanipal of Assyria, a Tahitian mourner's dress of pearl shell, Pompeian wall paintings and the treasures buried in Anglo-Saxon tombs. The older and more frivolous objects were gradually discarded: neighbors on more than one occasion complained of the smell of burning snakes.

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The museum grew till it achieved the vast size of the present building all but finished by 1852, covering 13½ acres, with its majestic neoclassic facade on Great Russell Street and spreading out around a central courtyard open to the sky. Of course, the space allotted for books had to grow with it, as cheaper printing turned a literary luxury item into a commodity available to all. In the first century of the museum's existence, there were six successive reading rooms, each larger than the last. One by one they became objects of a torrent of complaint—about the draftiness, bad light, bad ventilation and bad smells. They allegedly combined to cause what was known as museum headache and to stimulate the growth of the museum flea, *Pulex Mus. Brit. Max.*, said to be twice the size of the common household variety.

And then Antonio Panizzi showed up. A brash young Italian revolutionary turned librarian and idea-man, he put an end to all that by sketching out a plan for the seventh, the classical and never-to-be-forgotten, Reading Room of the British Museum. In 1852 he proposed to put it in the middle of that great interior courtyard where no one ever went because the sun never reached it and grass would not grow. His project, grandiose and imaginative yet practical, won quick consent from the authorities. The plans were drawn up and approved, and the money was voted by Parliament. The construction went up at a rapid rate and with an astonishing efficiency.

A librarian in the old Reading Room (above) searches a catalogue by hand. The new electronic catalogue has 150 terminals.

It was finished, with all its copper sheathing and gilt trimming, in a little over three years, at a cost of £150,000. It was state of the art in building techniques and building materials, particularly in the use of cast iron, which was mass-produced, fireproof, and lighter and stronger than stone. The dome of the Reading Room was two feet less in diameter than the dome of the Pantheon in Rome, but where the architects of Hadrian's day had to build solid stone piers covering 7,400 square feet to hold their dome up, Panizzi's rests on iron piers occupying about 200 square feet. It even had a rudimentary air-conditioning system and in due time acquired electric light (gas would have been too dangerous) so that it could stay open past 4 P.M. in winter and on those all-too-frequent days when the kind of fog that a character in Dickens called a "London particular" reduced visibility to near zero.

Still there were complaints. Air still circulated poorly—the poet Swinburne once passed out there from lack of oxygen. The staff was overworked, underpaid and sometimes more picturesque than useful to readers. It was said that the trustees, aristocrats all, used the museum as a dumping ground for aging butlers when they started dropping spoons or wine bottles. And, of course, there were the eternal complaints of Britons bewailing the fall of traditional standards before the creeping forces of modernity. "Must your officials in the Reading Room," asked a letter received in 1932, "be so dowdily dressed? When I first made use of it they dressed in accordance with the dignity and tradition of the place and wore top hats. Today there was a callow youth in the sacred inner circle, dressed in what looked like a brown 'sports jacket', with dark trousers, a soft-colored collar which may or may not have been washed last week, and a loud tie."

Petty dissonances in a swelling harmony of praise. The Reading Room took its place along with the Houses of Parliament, the Crystal Palace, the railways, the steel mills, the creation of the dreadnought, as one of the defining monuments of Britain at the peak of its power and glory.

Time has a way of catching up with monuments. More and more treasures came swarming in from the ends of

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the empire, more and more millions of books were printed. It was increasingly impossible to keep them all in a space of 13½ acres. To preserve some kind of administrative order, a new entity calling itself the British Library was created. Even so, the new library and old museum still jostled each other in the same limited space.

It had already come to a clear choice. Either move out the books, or get rid of such things as the Elgin Marbles and the Aztec masks inlaid with turquoise and the gold from the Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo.

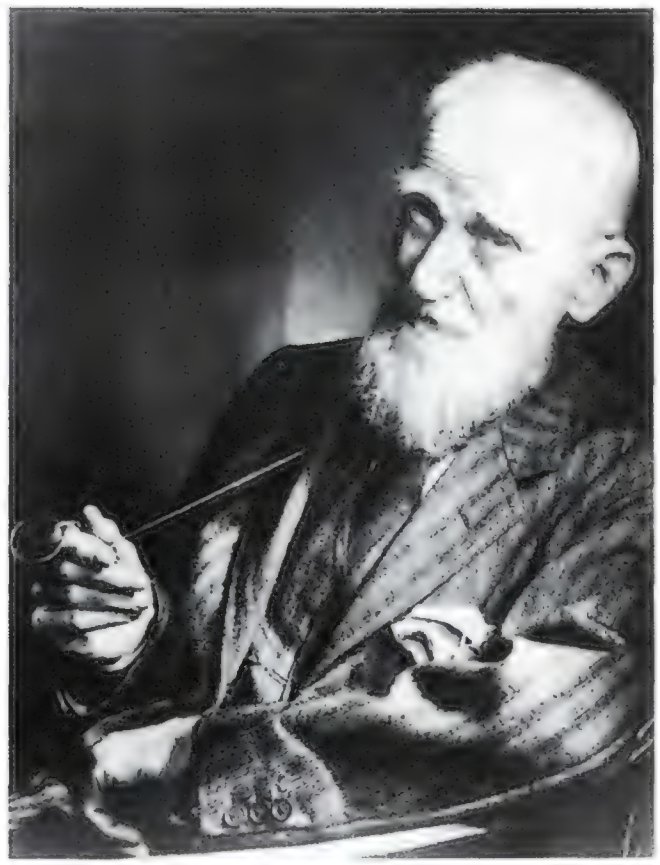
Moving the books seemed simpler and cheaper. When the decision was made, a promising 40-year-old architect named Colin St. John Wilson and his partner, Sir Leslie Martin, were commissioned to design a new building. Then a round of typical troubles that attend the construction of public buildings took over. Year after year, sites were changed, plans were made and unmade, governments fell, budgets were slashed, costs were overrun. Along the way Martin dropped out. After 12 years, in 1974, a new site was at last found at St. Pancras, and there, by 1984, giant machines began to dig a hole 80 feet deep for the basement, the biggest basement ever built for peaceful purposes, says Wilson, and which would be the heart of the structure: it was where the books were to be stored.

Even in the new building there were costly technical errors—badly designed shelves, 2,000 miles of defectively installed wiring—and the project was plagued by administrative errors and hints of corruption. Wilson had no idea that he would be in his 70s before he would be able to guide visitors around the now just finished building. He admits that he need not have been surprised; apart from Panizzi's nonpareil performance, it is an old English tradition to dither over the construction of major public buildings, and this was to be the biggest peacetime construction job in England in the 20th century. Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th had to fight for 36 years to get St. Paul's Cathedral built to his specifications, and he was put on half pay before the job was done.

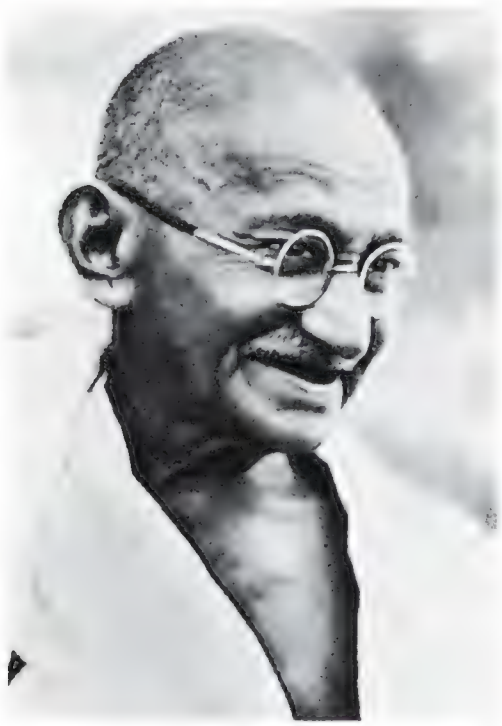
Typically, not everyone approved of the basement, or indeed of any part of the building. There was general denigration from the press, from the Prince of Wales and other foes of any architecture deemed modern. Petitions were signed by leading intellectual figures on both sides of the Atlantic, appealing for the survival of the ancient landmark. And, inevitably, a chorus of voices chimed in saying it would cost too much; the same voices saying the same thing as in 1753.

But the machine of progress had begun its inexorable march. By the end of 1996, only three years behind schedule and with a cost only three times the original estimate, the main building of the new library was standing, complete enough at least to start receiving books from Great Russell Street. Once the fences around the work site were taken down and the building could actually be seen, critics began to find, grudgingly at first, that the place was really very handsome and appealing, bluff and forthright and practical and British to the core. The *Evening Standard*, which had been flinging mud at it for years, now found it a "structure of amazing originality and grandeur . . . warm, harmonious, friendly."

The outer shell is constructed of ten million handmade bricks—the ideal building material for the British climate, says Wilson—in a style both contemporary and altogether in harmony with the St. Pancras railway station and hotel next door. Not long ago St. Pancras Station, built in the 1860s in the full flush of Victorian self-assurance, was universally derided as a fussy, frilly Victorian-Gothic eyesore cluttered with pointed-arch windows and decorative turrets. Today it is being admired again. When it becomes the new terminus of the Channel Tunnel railway, its sturdy brick spires will be the first sight of London offered to visitors from the Continent.



Celebrated users—literary and otherwise—included (clockwise, from above) George Bernard Shaw, Mohandas Gandhi, W. B. Yeats, V. I. Lenin, Isadora Duncan and Rudyard Kipling.



Wilson's library is majestic enough when you enter it, with a grand marble staircase leading up to the King's Library, George III's personal collection given to the people by the Crown: six stories' worth of books, shining in their ancient bindings. There is plenty of room for showing off the rare and ancient treasures accumulated over the years, and for exhibitions of new discoveries like the first-century manuscripts found in Afghanistan, which have been called the Dead Sea Scrolls of Buddhism. But this library, like the old one, is primarily work space for serious researchers, and it is as up-to-the-technological-minute of the 1990s as the old one was to that of the 1850s.

Instead of a single grandiose reading room, there are 11 L-shaped spaces spread out over three floors, each air-conditioned and with an electronically controlled mixture of artificial light and natural light from clerestories and skylights. Where the desks of the old room once had inkwells, all 1,206 desks now have outlets for laptops and whatever other electronic devices can be hooked up to the wilderness of wires beneath the floors. It takes only a click at a nearby terminal, and any book you want will come up from any level of the basement and be at your desk in a half-hour to 45 minutes. The desks, of American oak, are spacious and handsome and practical for working. The rooms are pleasant to walk through, with just enough discreet curves in balconies and fixtures and ceilings and porthole windows to break the deadly rectangularity of so many contemporary public buildings.

Some unreconstructed lovers of the past will never forgive the new quarters for not providing the vertical dividers that in the old Reading Room protected you from the prying eyes of the person working at the desk opposite you. But in the spread-out configuration of the new rooms such screens would have made it almost impossible to spot the occasional malefactor who slips in, like the clergyman in the 19th century who, sufficiently hidden from the supervisor's raised platform in the center of the room, clipped sermons out of religious periodicals so that he could pass them off on his congregation as his own.

No one had ever moved 12 million books before. The previous record was made by Caliph al-Hakam II of Córdoba, a city that in the tenth century occupied much the same position in the world of culture as London would a millennium later. It is recorded that the caliph moved his library of 400,000 books from one of his palaces to another in six months. He was outdone a couple of years ago when some 28 miles of books and documents, the ones that hardly anybody ever asks for, were moved to Boston Spa in the north of England (if anybody does ask for them, they can be delivered to St. Pancras overnight).

With the valuable experience thus gained, the library was able to start the massive transfer to St. Pancras in December 1996, and by October 1997 a sizable part of the stock was already in place on the 200 miles of shelves there, ready to be put on a cart by library staff and then proceed by elevator to the reading rooms above, after an electronic signal is given. It is now confidently predicted that all 12 million items will be in place on shelves in St. Pancras by mid-1999.

People are already speaking of the British Library as a success. As for the British Museum, it is delighted with the extra space made available by the departure of those millions of books and has already embarked on an ambitious program to create a glass-roofed Great Court in its center. Panizzi's Reading Room will be preserved, repaint-

"In that book-encircled space, he always could find peace. He loved to see the volumes rising tier above tier into the misty dome. He loved the chairs that glide so noiselessly, and the radiating desks, and the central area, where the catalogue shelves curve round the superintendent's throne. There he knew that his life was not ignoble. It was worth while to grow old and dusty seeking for truth though truth is unattainable, restating questions that have been stated at the beginning of the world."—E. M. Forster

ed in its original colors of cream, cerulean and gold, and it will still be a reading room, with a sizable mass of reference books, open for the first time in its history all day long to all who want to come and use it.

What will the British Library be like in another century, in 2097? Some people think that by then there will be no need for libraries at all; everything ever printed on paper will have been digitized, ready to be snatched out of the air by everybody's handheld computer. Others say that digitized or not, the quantity of reading material will continue to grow exponentially, astronomically, megastatistically, and the spacious halls of the new library will soon be bursting at the seams. Already a controversy has arisen about a piece of vacant land to the north. Librarians want to preserve it for future expansion; the government wants to sell or lease it to developers to help balance the budget.

But this is England, and as long as there will be an England, there will be some kind of a Reading Room.

For proof of its eternal hold on the British literary mind, you may read Max Beerbohm's unforgettable fantasy about how he found himself one summer's day in 1897 lunching in a London restaurant next to a young poet, a protohippie with a wispy beard, a cape and a floppy hat. His name was Enoch Soames, and he had total contempt for a civilization that had left his three slight books totally unbought and unread. If only, he said, he could come back in a hundred years when the world would surely be full of "endless editions, commentaries, prolegomena, biographies," all devoted to the works and genius of Enoch Soames. It would, he said, be worth selling his soul to the Devil to savor the moment.

At this point, a gentleman who was sitting nearby, a portly unpleasant-looking man with pointed mustaches and a scarlet waistcoat, took the opportunity to introduce himself as the Devil in person; in exchange for Soames' soul he was willing to offer an immediate trip to the Reading Room for the whole afternoon of June 3, 1997.

Despite Beerbohm's anguished pleas, Soames agreed, and promptly disappeared into thin air, only to return for dinner that evening in despair. He had indeed turned up a hundred years in the future, and of course he found himself in the British Museum Reading Room. Plunging into the familiar catalogue volume listing items from SN to SOF, he found nothing, except the three small, familiar entries listing his three unread books. In all the vast mass of printed work devoted to the literature of his century he could find no word about himself except in a single academic survey, written in futuristic spelling, that described him as "an immajnari karrakter" in a "sumwot labud sattire but not without vallu az showing hou seriusli the yung men ov th aiteen-ninetiz took themselvz." Before he disappeared for good, he uttered one last heartbroken cry: "Try to make them know that I did exist."

The Devil, we now know, had played a characteristically dirty trick on Enoch Soames. For on June 3, 1997, Soames was far from being a forgotten nonentity. On the afternoon of that day a group of his admirers was waiting to greet him in the old Reading Room.

There was no confirmed sighting of Enoch Soames that day, but perhaps that was because, as Beerbohm had said, the best word to describe him was "dim." If he did turn up, and looked in Room 30 where the library kept on display in glass cases some of the most prestigious of the treasures it has collected over the years, he would have found a case marked with his name and containing not only a pencil sketch of him by Max Beerbohm but a copy of his "second book," *Fungoids*, described as privately printed in 1895. It was the same size glass case as those in other parts of the gallery displaying to the perpetual files of visitors two of the four surviving copies of the Magna Carta, Lady Jane Grey's prayer book, the original score of Handel's *Messiah*, the battle plan of Lord Nelson for meeting the French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar, a fair copy of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a manuscript page of *Finnegans Wake*, the original manuscript of the lyrics for "Yesterday" by Paul McCartney. For an "immajnari karrakter," that is not doing too badly. It is the kind of recognition for which more than one of the flesh-and-blood authors I know would willingly sell their souls to the Devil.

This is the 73rd story that writer Robert Wernick has published in SMITHSONIAN. *His last was on Diderot's* Encyclopédie *(May 1997).*

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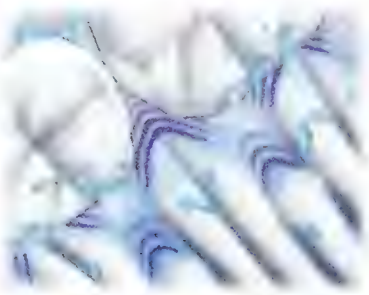

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The Miracle

CORAL SPAWN ONLY ONCE A YEAR, AND AT NIGHT; HOW THEY MANAGE TO SYNCHRONIZE REMAINS A MYSTERY

BY JOHN F. ROSS

I HAVEN'T THOUGHT SO MUCH ABOUT SEX since I was 18 years old. That's all the team of marine biologists can talk about as we ride the swells aboard the 50-foot research vessel *Sabina*. The sun sets the horizon on fire, and bursts of lightning illuminate the coastline of Florida's Key Largo five miles distant.

In a few hours will occur one of nature's most remarkable events: several species of reef-building star corals will spawn en masse. Once a year, each of the reef-building corals reproduces in an orgiastic pulse, spewing out billions upon billions of eggs and sperm into the water column.

Or so Alina Szmant hopes. While the University of Miami research biologist is an undisputed expert on this event in Florida and the Caribbean, she must combine guesswork with hard science to figure out when the coral species will spawn. Remarkably, science knows little about how corals reproduce, a major gap in reef biology. The mass-spawning phenomenon wasn't even described in a scientific journal until 1984, when researchers on Australia's Great Barrier Reef chronicled the event. About that same time, Szmant noted it in the Caribbean. Before then, conventional wisdom held that corals did not propagate sexually, but passively and vegetatively, like plants. The discovery that many corals "broadcast spawn" has opened a new window into the intricate workings of the reef. And it's not a moment too soon, as biologists struggle to understand why coral reefs are dying around the world. Understanding coral reproduction could provide clues to how to rebuild reefs. When Szmant extends an invitation to accompany her on her fifth season of diving on the Key Largo Dry Rocks, a reef in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, to witness the spawning event, I accept eagerly.

One night, as darkness falls around us, I spy a glowing object in the water 20 yards off our stern. Then another appears and another, until the water is filled with bioluminescent green blotches. One patch of light close by the boat reveals a polychaete worm glowing like a disembodied length of neon sign, wriggling madly and exuding a diaphanous cloud of eggs. A group of much smaller male suitors wriggles up into the cloud. "Anyone want a thesis topic?" Szmant half jokes, pointing to the worms. In a few fleeting moments the display is over; the worms become invisible in the dark waters.

Left: A diver swims over star coral, the yellowish-greenish formation studded with sponges and algae. Inset: Another star coral broadcasts its egg-sperm packages in a perfectly timed salvo.

of the Reef

Alina Szmant must combine guesswork with science to figure out when a coral species will spawn.

Looking into the inky blackness of the water and fingering my scuba tank nervously, I can take one guess why mass coral spawning remained one of nature's best-kept secrets for so long. Neither scientists nor recreational divers have logged that much time diving at night. I'm a little nervous about diving in the dark. I imagine coffin-size sharks, and jellyfish with evil tentacles, lurking just below the surface. Brad Buckley, a superskinny graduate student with a wry grin, tells me not to give them another thought, the sharks will see us long before we see them. When I finally jump into the warm water, my fears dissolve as the tiny beam of light from my flashlight illuminates creatures little seen during the day. I swim right up to half-asleep fish the length of cigars. I observe a spotted moray eel completely out of its lair, its mouth gaping. Lobsters are so abundant I reach out and touch one. I turn off my light and the darkness comes right up to my mask. With a sweep of my hand, tiny bioluminescent creatures light up and rush off my fingers like pixie dust. I follow two divers by the chemical glow sticks attached to their tanks and help them secure nets over the tops of big heads of coral. The nets look like comical dunce caps, gradually narrowing from a hole the size of a large dinner plate to a cup the size of a baseball. A float holds them upright. When the spawn occurs several hours later, the nets will capture the eggs and sperm.

Coral reefs are the most massive animal-made structures on earth, yet one of the planet's most fragile. Australia's Great Barrier Reef stretches for 1,200 miles, and a coral atoll in the Marshall Islands plunges 4,000 feet deep. Much of the Florida Keys themselves are remnants of ancient reefs.

At first glance, the major barrier reefs' very massiveness suggests a sort

of invincibility and robustness of life rarely seen in nature. This, however, is just an illusion. Only a slight veneer of life—a little less than a quarter of an inch—clings to a massive, dead skeleton made from calcium laid down by countless generations of coral forebears.

Scientists have discovered that corals act like the proverbial canary in the mine. Corals are sensitive to changes in environmental conditions. In the Galápagos Islands off Ecuador, the corals are the first to feel an El Niño, unusually warm water that comes in from the western Pacific every few years. Corals acutely feel the impact of human activities: pollution, sewage and fertilizer runoff, erosion of the land and hard recreational use. If fishermen catch too many grazers, for example, unchecked algae may deprive the coral of light.

Earlier in the week, Szmant took me out during the day to look at one particularly fine specimen of mountainous star coral. Like many people who have enjoyed recognition early in life, Szmant is a person who wears her confidence easily. In 1970 at the age of 23, this energetic woman enjoyed a ticker-tape parade in Chicago in her honor as one of the first women to spend time in the first underwater habitat. Diving is second nature to her. Before we jump in, she explains that the coral we're about to see is one of the "sequoias" of the seas and probably more than 500 years old. The coral head is 14 feet in height and as thick around as several telephone booths.

The genus we're looking at, *Montastraea*, thrived long before flowering plants—the angiosperms—came to dominate the land 130 million years ago. Over the course of their evolution, the corals entered into a symbiotic relationship that renders them, in essence, half animal and half plant. In the long-distant past, a microscopic algal plant known as a zooxanthella learned to find safe haven inside the interior of the coral polyp animal. In return for shelter, the algae offered the coral a rich source of food. Just like most plants, algae photosynthesize, trapping the energy from the sun and converting it into the complex sugars that form the stuff of life. In addition, the algae accelerate the conversion of calcium in the water to a form that the corals can use to build their skeletons. If humans had a similar symbiosis with a plant, a coral reef scientist once told me, it would be like having tiny vegetables growing in our veins. We'd never go hungry.

With this valuable partnership in place, corals have gained a foothold in warm, shallow waters, a biome that can be a virtual desert because there are so few nutrients. The resulting reefs create something even more

A school of glassy sweepers finds cover in a stand of healthy elkhorn coral. The variety of shapes and forms to be found on the reef is a major reason for its teeming biodiversity.

enduring than their massive structure: an oasis of rich and highly diverse marine life. Like a wreck of a ship that becomes covered in short order by sponges and other invertebrates, and is home to all sorts of fish, the growing reef becomes a mecca for life. As we dive around this magnificent head of coral, Szmant points out two large Nassau groupers that live under a ledge. Meanwhile, sheets of thousands of tiny silversides mimic the contours of the coral head, as they try to evade a group of hungry jacks. These fish represent only the largest and most obvious colonists of the reef habitat. The reef provides an environment where creatures from large to microscopic can thrive. Without it, all that would exist here would be a sandy bottom with little visible life.

In contrast, the reef offers housing for multitudes of creatures. There are tiny efficiencies, home to snapping shrimp and other invertebrates. Large mansions, or overhangs, protect all manner of fish species. There's room for vegetarians and carnivores, scavengers and opportunists. As in a city, the possibility for great industry exists and a complex food web develops. Coral reefs are among the richest ecosystems in the world and home conservatively to some 30 percent of the 274,000 known marine species.

The coral reef "city" is efficient, perhaps too efficient: there's little fat. The reef lives literally and figuratively on the edge, so efficient in its energy dynamic that it's vulnerable to fluctuations in the climate and actions by humankind. Most reef biologists agree that about 10 percent of the world's reefs are dead or severely damaged, and another 30 percent are in danger, although debate goes on about whether nature or humankind is more to blame. One of the reasons that Szmant had been drawn to learning about the reproduction of reefs is to help them survive.

When I caught up with her in Florida, she was trying to tack down the spawning dates for *Acropora palmata*, a common elkhorn species found throughout southern Florida and the Caribbean. It's now known that *Acropora*, *Montastraea* and other mass-spawning coral genera time their reproduction according to a

Boats jam every nook and cranny of Looe Key, a diving spot in the Florida Keys. The islands are themselves ancient reefs.

lunar calendar. *Acropora*, for example, begins to spawn two to four nights, and *Montastraea* six nights, after the full moon in August.

Corals not only use the moon, they also time their release to occur a certain number of hours after sunset, so there's another component that comes into play in the timing of the spawn. Nighttime offers some protection against the masses of plankton-eating fish that patrol the reefs by day.

Szmant acknowledges that coral reef biologists are still learning how to predict the timing of the spawning events. While she's getting better at reading the coral "clock," she and other reef biologists have little idea what makes the timepiece tick in the first place. "How circadian rhythms work is a huge mystery in biology, not only in corals but in humans and other animals," Szmant says. How one species, spread across a wide reef, developed a biochemical ability to time its reproductive cycle—the individual corals essentially synchronizing their watches to go off once a year—is yet another of nature's mysteries. I can't get that out of my head as I swim underwater just before the appointed time for the spawning. I can see the slightly pink, tiny egg-sperm bundles in the stars of the corals, primed and ready to fire like cannonballs in the maws of thousands of miniature translucent cannons.

I half expect to hear a noise when the corals launch their precious packages into the water, but I hear only my ragged breath in the regulator. I watch a *Montastraea* coral head as the eggs pop out in a quick wave that moves across its face. Suddenly streams of these tiny balls are wafting up around me, and I'm reminded of a

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snow-globe toy, in which a single shake envelops the scene in a swirl of snowflakes. My regulator begins to taste more than a little fishy.

The egg bundles rise to the surface like tiny bubbles. Like other eggs, those of coral are filled with fat, the nutrient that the larvae will need to begin their adventures. The buoyant fat propels the egg-sperm packages to the surface, and soon a substantial carpet of gametes clings there, bobbing in the waves. Another twist in the tale of coral reproduction is that most of the big reef-building species are hermaphroditic organisms that produce both eggs and sperm. Each bundle hurtling by me contains about 120 eggs and maybe 2 million sperm. In a half-hour or less, the waves will break these bundles apart, allowing the gametes of many coral heads to mix together.

We've used the nets atop the coral heads so that Szmant will know exactly what species the spawn comes from. In short order, the cups in the nets gather a third of an inch of egg bundles, turning a light pink color. With my buddy diver, we begin to collect the cups. It's a Laurel and Hardy routine underwater, juggling flashlights and lids, trying to avoid a steady current that pushes us against patches of fire coral that abrade and burn our hands. Keeping the cup upside down so the eggs don't join their siblings up on the surface is a daunting task. Plastic cups, I realize, weren't designed to have their caps replaced easily under 40 feet of water at night. Finally, our mission accomplished, we triumphantly surface with six cups containing egg bundles.

The deck of the *Sabina* is buzzing with activity. Other divers return with cups of gametes from other corals on the reef. I'm handed a pipette—a long glass eyedropper—and begin agitating egg-sperm packets floating in plastic tubs. Once the sperm and eggs come apart, we separate them with special filters. Dozens of plastic containers spread across the deck now contain sperm or eggs from scattered coral heads all over the reef. We have gametes from three species of *Montastraea* coral: one released at 10 P.M., the other two, an hour and a half later. We help Szmant mix the sperm from one species with the eggs of another. She is interested in learning whether these different species will hybridize to produce live offspring.

Back in the laboratory after a long night, most of us fall into our beds, but Szmant and a couple of die-hard assistants begin the vigil over the newly fertilized eggs as dawn breaks. Just like newborn babies, these larvae need great care, and their water must be changed every couple of hours. I find myself rooting for these tiny creatures. Their mortality rate is so high here, it's hard to imagine that many can survive out in the open sea. The fertilized eggs soon begin cell division, where the one cell splits into two, the two become four and so on. Under a microscope, the organism takes the shape of a cornflake. In 24 hours, the creature sprouts cilia, hairs that wiggle and permit the organism to move about. The tiny larvae begin to dive around the plastic containers. After five to eight days, the larvae stop further development and are ready to "settle," or find a hard surface to attach to and grow into a mature coral animal.

Until quite recently, most reef scientists believed that the coral larvae found their new homes by chance, not unlike a dandelion's seeds that are spread randomly by the wind. Aileen Morse, a scientist at the University of California at Santa Barbara, had good

A rogues' gallery of the reef, from the top: mottled and yellow moray eels; snapping shrimp; slipper lobster; and a brittle star.

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Left: Aileen Morse, right, and a colleague check capture nets on a star coral just before it spawns. Right: Biologists are learning to transplant coral to damaged reefs, such as this one undergoing bleaching.

reason to suspect that a more precise scenario might be operating. Morse, who recently collaborated with Szmant in a study of coral spawning in the Keys, has, for the past 15 years, been examining how marine invertebrate larvae select a home. She concurs that prevailing currents greatly influence delivery of larvae. "But there are other critical factors," she tells me. Morse found that coral larvae are dependent upon a sophisticated sensory system for recognizing the appropriate place on the reef to settle. They detect a particular molecular cue found exclusively on the surfaces of marine algae that cement the dead parts of the reef together. Only when a larva bumps up against these surfaces are its sensory receptors activated. This in turn triggers the metamorphosis from the soft-bodied larva to the young adult complete with protective skeleton. Thereafter the coral begins to develop rapidly into an adult animal. If larvae do not detect this metamorphic cue, they continue to drift and eventually die.

So far, Morse has found that larvae in four of the largest families of reef-building corals recognize the same chemical cue, each family in its own way. The cue-containing algae are distributed all over the reef. How does a larva select its spot? Each has a unique set of hardwired behaviors that combine to settle it in species-specific patterns on the reef. For instance, some species settle only on the undersides of the reef in a narrow range of depth. Others do so on upward-facing surfaces over a wide depth range.

Morse's research has led to the development of a novel "flypaper" for controlled settlement and metamorphosis of corals. It has been possible to attach the purified chemical cue to resin beads or glass. Various forms of this flypaper are being tested and modified for use as substrates for both damaged reefs and coral aquaculture.

Morse's research reveals that the chemosensory mechanisms used by the coral larvae are quite similar to those used by human brain cells to communicate with each other. This insight raises some fascinating questions: For one, do these molecular communication systems share a common evolutionary past or did they evolve independently?

During dinner on our night off, I sit next to a senior scientist from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He has been involved in the restoration of two Key Largo reefs damaged by ship groundings. NOAA, along with reef ecologists, coastal engineers and a marine construction firm, devised and installed concrete blocks to re-create the three-dimensional complexity destroyed by the groundings. These were festooned with fossil reef rock; this summer corals, sponges and sea fans will be transplanted onto the new reefs. The kind of research being done by scientists such as Szmant and Morse will help make restorations successful.

The next night I'm back at work, and after we've collected the nets I manage to grab a few moments to shed my cumbersome scuba gear and dive in with a snorkel. The moon sheds a dim light onto the surface of the water. I hold my breath, submerge, and look up at the surface from below and see the silhouettes of billions of eggs—the future of the reef—bobbing gently. I turn off my light and watch in amazement as the surface begins to ignite like a meteor shower. The display is caused by small fish nipping at the eggs and creating sparks of bioluminescence. As I watch, I can't help but wonder whether any of these eggs will some day grow into a beautiful 500-year-old coral head and be enjoyed by humans in that long-distant time.

John F. Ross last went underwater for SMITHSONIAN *in his December 1996 story on the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.*

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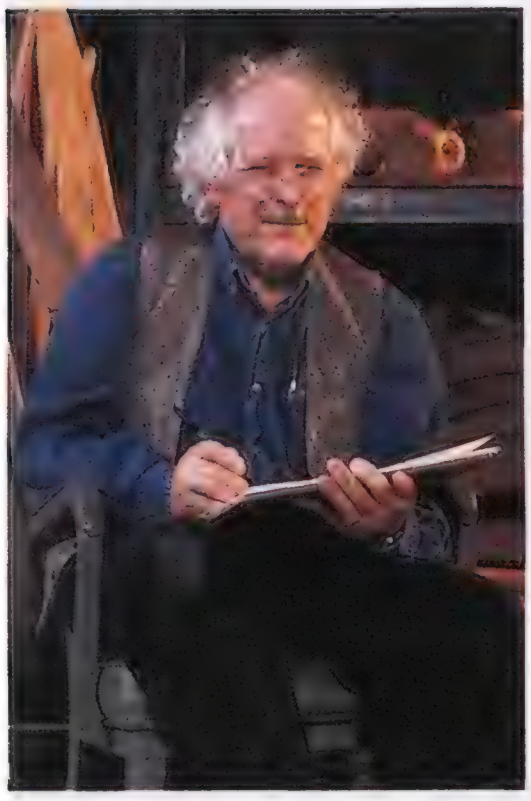
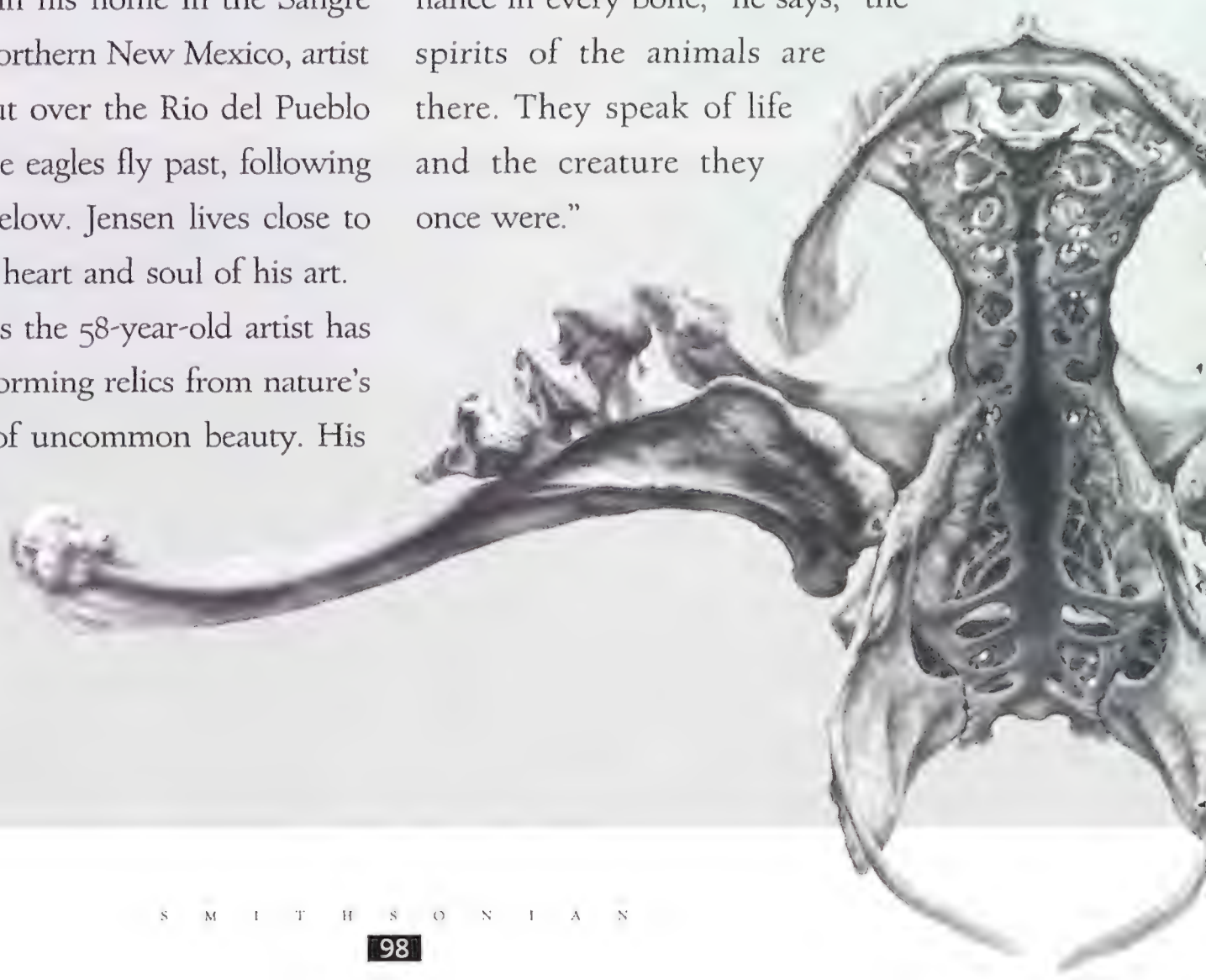
The Beauty of Bare



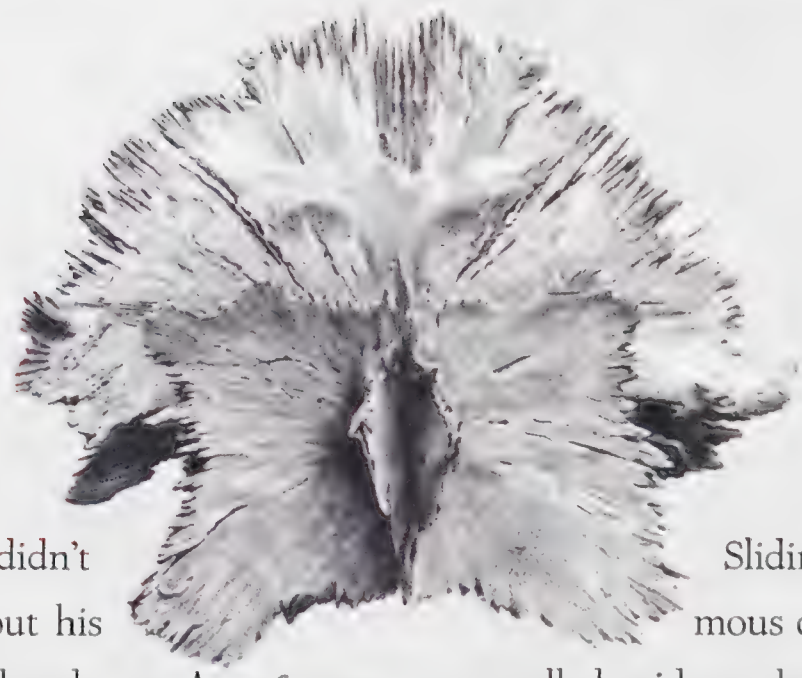
The room is replete with bones. They fill shelves and boxes, embellish windowsills and walls. A Pleistocene cave bear skull from Russia's Ural Mountains dominates one shelf. Nearby reside the relics of elk and lynx, coyote and loon, pelican and wolf. Old cigar boxes overflow with other, smaller bones.

From this workroom in his home in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico, artist Gendron Jensen looks out over the Rio del Pueblo Valley. From time to time eagles fly past, following the course of the river below. Jensen lives close to nature here—close to the heart and soul of his art.

For more than 30 years the 58-year-old artist has devoted himself to transforming relics from nature's midden into art objects of uncommon beauty. His meticulously rendered, often monumental, graphite drawings of bones invite the viewer to see these relics in a new way—to journey beyond their ordinary anatomical context to a deeper, more spiritual realm. Conjuring art from nature, Jensen combines, refines and enlarges these relics, juxtaposing shapes and textures to create sculptural, iconographic forms. These compelling works, at once highly detailed and highly abstract, evoke a primal connection to nature and its many mysteries. "There is a majesty inherent in bones," says Jensen, "a humbling geography that summons me to map its glories." For Jensen, bones represent the very foundation of being. "There is a vital resonance in every bone," he says; "the spirits of the animals are there. They speak of life and the creature they once were."

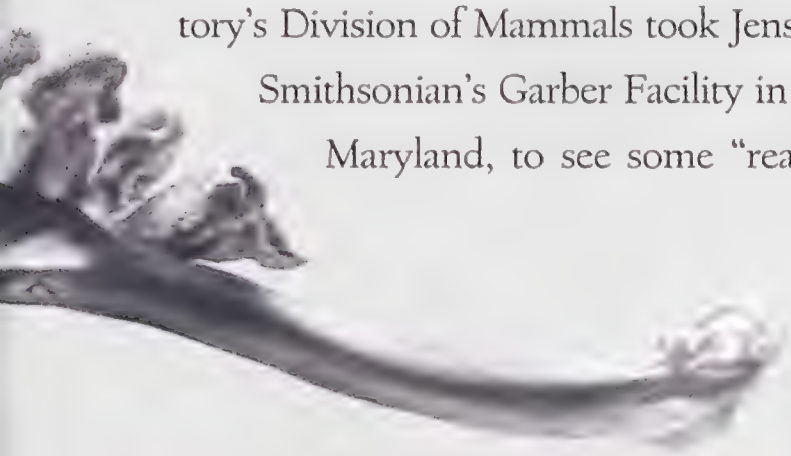


Bones



Largely self-taught, Jensen didn't start drawing until age 26, but his bond with nature was forged early on. As a 6-year-old exploring the shores of Minnesota's Pokegama Lake, Jensen came upon a small rodent skull. "I didn't know what it was then, but I was impressed by the way the teeth curved and fit back into the jaw," he recalls. "That discovery began my journey."

The onetime recluse spent 5 years at a Benedictine monastery in Wisconsin and 17 as a semi-hermit on a former mink farm south of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Ten years ago, he forsook the northwoods of Minnesota for the mountains of New Mexico and a new life with artist Christine Taylor Patten. In the winter of 1986, a grant allowed Jensen to come to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History to draw turtle bones (*Around the Mall*, August 1986). During that stay Charles Potter of Natural History's Division of Mammals took Jensen to the Smithsonian's Garber Facility in Suitland, Maryland, to see some "real bones."



Artist Gendron Jensen (far left) prepares field studies for many of his pencil drawings. The work at left, from 1980, configures bald eagle relics; the drawing above juxtaposes snapping turtle bones.

Sliding open the door of an anonymous corrugated-metal building, Potter pulled aside a plastic drape to reveal the behemoth bones of a baleen whale. "That moment left me changed for all time," explains Jensen. From this experience sprang the resolve for a second collaboration with the Smithsonian, one that the artist hopes will draw attention to the fate of the blue whale. Working with the collections at the Smithsonian and two other museums, Jensen will create a series of large-scale drawings of the skeletal relics of this leviathan. The project will culminate, if funds allow, in a traveling exhibition and a book.

Jensen's drawings, which are all rendered in pencil, have found their way into the collections of such museums as Minneapolis' Walker Art Center and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. "What makes Gendron Jensen unique," says LACMA director Graham Beal, "is his single-minded vision and passionate focus." At the heart of that vision is the bare beauty of bones. "They are inexhaustible," Jensen declares. "I keep going back—they are a source of immeasurable wonder." —*Diane M. Bolz*

PP 98-103 RICHARD SOUTHER, P 98 WALTER P CALLAHAN

The totemic forms of this monumental diptych, created in honor of Gendron and Christine's 1987 wedding, were choreographed from gray wolf and white-tailed deer relics.

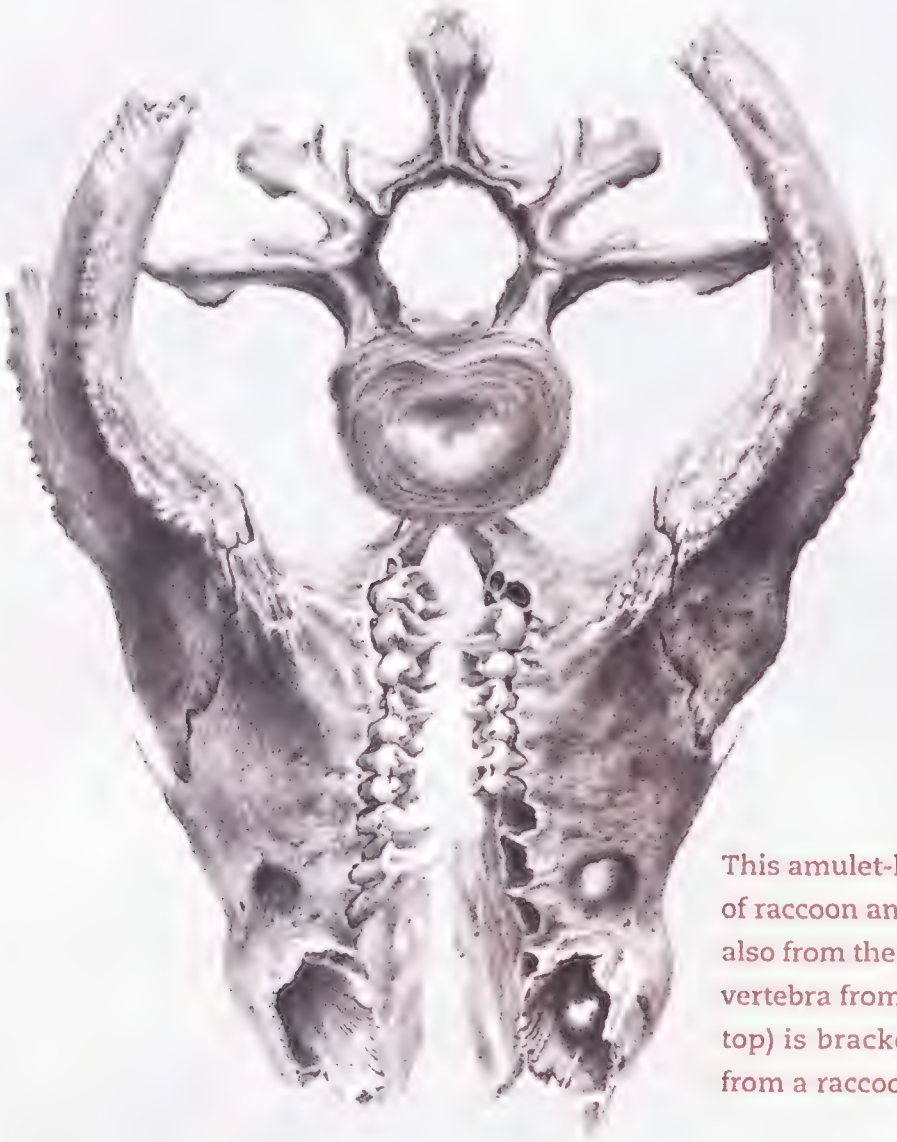
Right: The drawing *Terrenped*
was also configured from the
bones of white-tailed deer and
gray wolf—prey and predator.
At top is a deer skull; "mir-
rored" below, a wolf skull.

Opossum cheekbones splay out from a snapping turtle vertebra (center) in this jigsaw-puzzle-like work from Jensen's 1980 *Terrenes* series, featuring creatures of the land.

Freshwater fish relics found on the shores of Pokegama Lake in northern Minnesota are transformed into delicate sculpture in this drawing from Jensen's 1978 *Aquatics* series.

WEDDING DIPTYCH TWEED MUSEUM OF ART, TERRENES STANLEY TIGERMAN & MARGARET MCCURRY

"The spirits of the animals are in the bones."



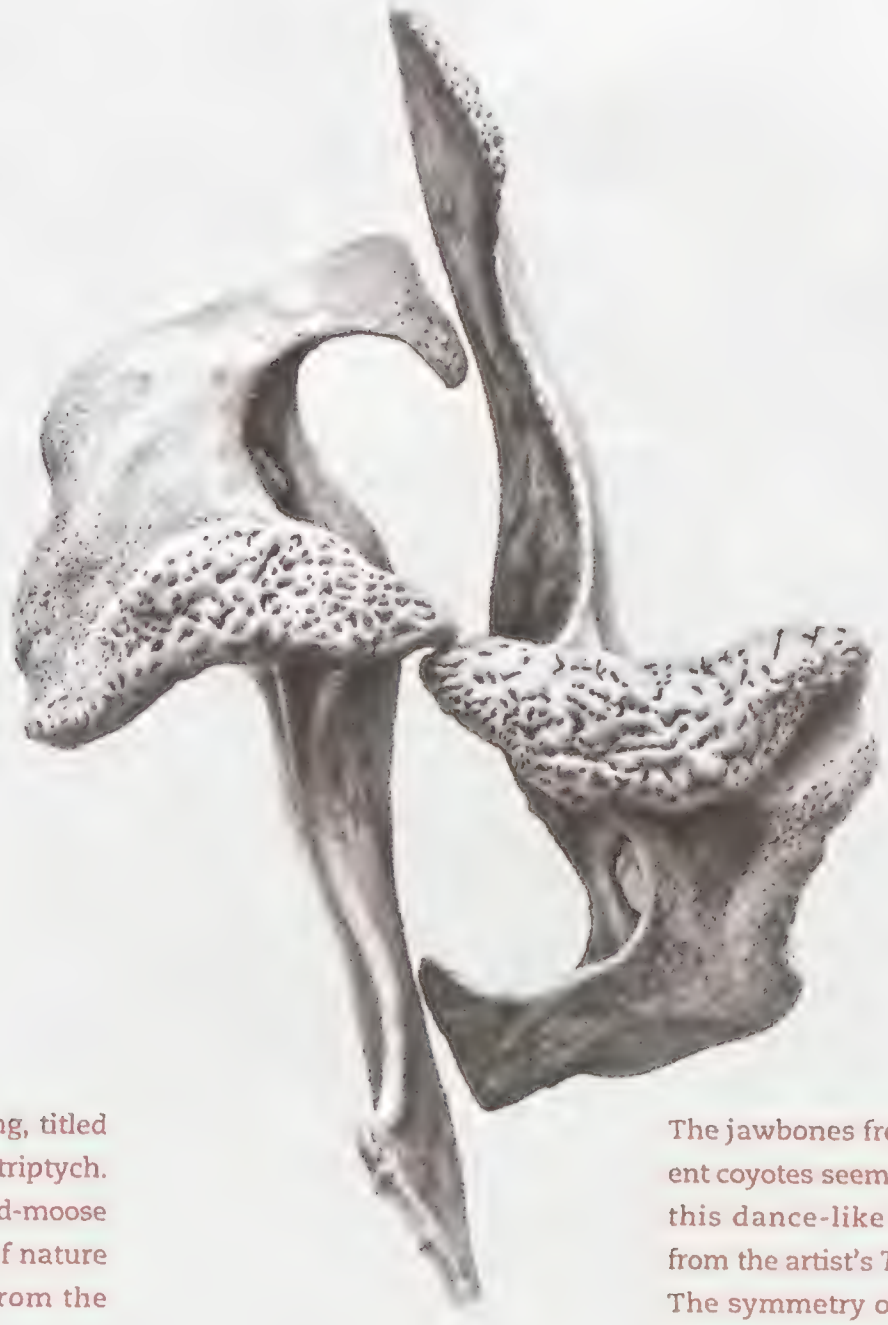
This amulet-like configuration of raccoon and coyote bones is also from the *Terrenes* series. A vertebra from a coyote (center, top) is bracketed by maxillae from a raccoon skull.

The ball ends of femur bones from a moose and a gray wolf form a counterpoint of prey and predator in *Isle Royale* (1994). Jensen was an artist in residence at the Isle Royale reserve.

A drawing from the *Aquatics* series captures an emblematic arrangement of freshwater painted turtle and snapping turtle relics. The work was destroyed in a fire.

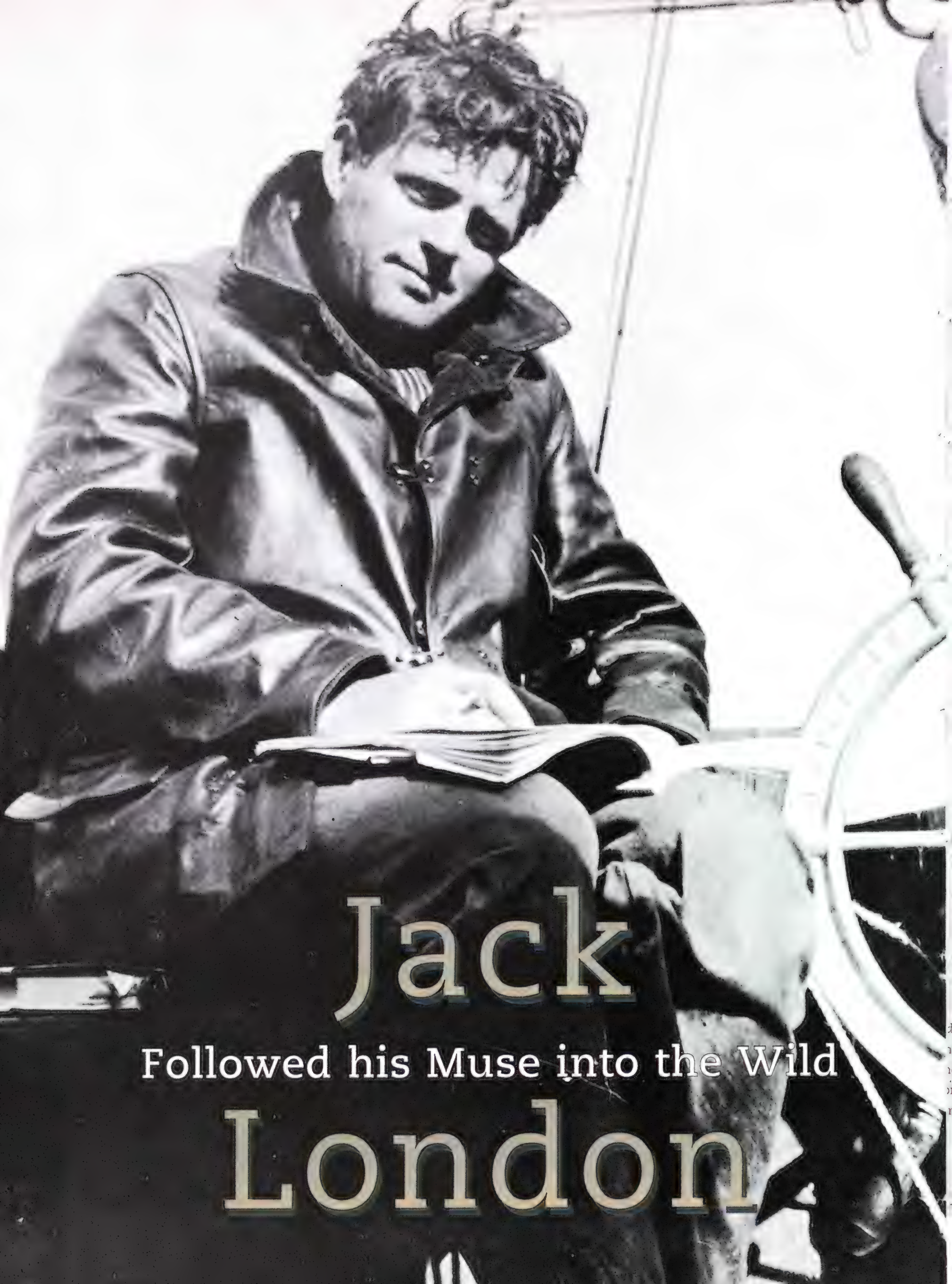
Jensen did this pen-and-ink field study at the Smithsonian's Garber Facility. The work combines two of the cervical vertebrae from a blue whale skeleton found in 1903.

This 7-foot-tall drawing, titled *Nina*, is part of a 1979 triptych. Derived from wolf-killed-moose bones, this talisman of nature conveys a message from the threshold of death.



The jawbones from two different coyotes seem to embrace in this dance-like composition from the artist's *Terrenes* series. The symmetry of the drawing creates a feeling of motion.

ISLE ROYALE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART; NINA MINNESOTA MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART



Jack London

Followed his Muse into the Wild

By midwinter, darkness was deep across the Yukon. Rivers were bound in ice, the woods were still and the sky was as brooding as the Klondikers themselves.

BY BRUCE WATSON

The previous August, thousands of men had hiked into the Canadian wilderness. Now they huddled in cabins, living on bread and beans, waiting for the sun. When the land unlocked, they would pour into the creeks, pans in hand, hoping to find gold and go home rich. But first, they had to survive another glacial night. During one especially lonely stretch, when their former lives seemed as fleeting as the northern lights, a few miners in a cabin near Henderson Creek listened to stories told by their cabin mate.

Huddled in his bunk, the man wore a dark cap pulled low. In the flickering candlelight, his beard looked like a bear's fur. He did not speak often, but when he did, he astounded his new friends. Most Klondikers were lucky to have read the Bible, but this man knew philosophy and could explain it. He recited poetry. He preached Socialism and the coming revolution. Only 21, he told tales from a lifetime of adventures. He had been a hobo riding the rails, a sailor on the high seas, an oyster pirate in San Francisco Bay. Now he claimed to be a writer. He hadn't published anything yet, but one day everyone would know the name he carved on the cabin wall—"Jack London—Author/miner."

A century after Jack London journeyed to the Yukon, "adventure" is pitched in package tours. Cruise ships plow the Alaskan waters he paddled by canoe, and resorts dot the South Seas where he sailed his boat, the *Snark*. In our time, London is often dismissed as a mere "adventure writer," but in his time he was *the* American author for the new century—bold, scandalous, self-assured. Before his sudden death at 40, London lived in perpetual motion, writing 50 books and traipsing across five continents. Yet of all his voyages, his longest was not on a map but up from poverty. With sheer will, he drove himself beyond a life of labor to become the most widely read American author in the world. Only a few of London's books remain on the shelf of classics, but for many a dreamer bound by time and space, his remains the life.

London was the child of Recklessness and Despair. The former was his father, William Chaney, a first-rate charlatan who roamed America lecturing on "free love" and "Astro-Theology." The latter was his mother, Flora Wellman, a spiritualist given to frenzied séances. In the 1870s, the two came together in a city known for its eccentrics, San Francisco. When Flora got pregnant out of wedlock, William ordered her to abort. Flora, however, preferred suicide. Laudanum failed to kill her, so the short, slim woman shot herself in the head. The bullet glanced off her forehead, but the shot was heard all over San Francisco. Newspapers denounced Chaney, who published a pamphlet "proving" he was not the father. Into this cauldron, Jack Chaney was born in January 1876. When his father fled to Oregon, Jack's mother married a kind, hard-working, sometime carpenter who gave her son his last name—London.

For Jack's first dozen years, the Londons moved all over the Bay Area, finally settling in Oakland. John London labored to provide for Jack and two daughters from a previous marriage. Flora continued her spiritualism, whooping, screaming and sometimes levitating Jack on the living room table. This wild beginning filled Jack with an enduring appetite for excitement. "I never had a boyhood and I seem to be hunting for that lost boyhood," he later wrote. "My environment was crude and rough and raw. I had no outlook, but an uplook rather." His first "uplook" came in books. While walking to school, at recess, late into the night, he read dime novels and tales of far-off countries. But at 13, when Flora lost the family savings in a real estate scam, Jack quit school and went to work to help support his family.

He was a model worker, young, strong, proud of his labor. In canneries, mills and factories, he became a "work beast," toiling 12 hours a day. He described the drudgery in his story "The Apostate": "The next morning he was torn bodily by his mother from the grip of sleep. Then came the meagre breakfast, the tramp through the dark, and the pale glimpse of day across the housetops as he turned his back on it and went through the factory gate. It was another day, of all the days, and all the days were alike." All work and no play made Jack a rowdy boy; he joined gangs prowling Oakland's wharves. Yet even while drinking and brawling like a man, he nurtured a boy's dreams.

"Don't you sometimes feel you'd die if you didn't know what's beyond them hills?" asks a boy in London's novel *The Valley of the Moon*. "There's the Pacific Ocean beyond, an' China, an' Japan, an' India. . . . I've lived in Oakland all my life, but I'm not going to live in Oakland the rest of my life, not by a long shot. I'm goin' to get away." At 17, he got away. Seaman Jack London, 5 feet 7 inches and broad-shouldered, shipped out aboard the *Sophia Sutherland*, a sealing ship bound for the Bering Sea. Before the mast, he saw nature in the raw and

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met brutish men who bet their lives against it.

He might have remained a sailor had he not discovered his talent for turning nature's power into prose. Returning to live with his mother, London heard of a newspaper essay contest. Though he had written only school reports, he got an old typewriter, banged out 4,000 words in three nights and won, beating students from Stanford and Berkeley. The $25 prize, equal to a month's wages in the jute mill where he worked, showed him a new horizon.

One night in 1895 a neighbor knocked on Flora London's front door. Did Flora know that a light was burning all night in her upstairs window? The light was only Jack's, Flora said. He was hard at work in his new job. He had returned from a year hopping freights and living in hobo camps. While serving a month in jail for vagrancy, he had time to concentrate on his reading of Socialist tracts. The treatises filled him with a fervent hope. Seeing all life as commodity, the laborer selling his muscle, the writer his brains, he made a solemn vow. "If I could not live on the parlor floor of society, I could, at any rate, have a try at the attic. . . . So I resolved to sell no more muscle, and to become a vender of brains. Then began a frantic pursuit of knowledge."

At 19, Jack enrolled at Oakland High School. But as a tobacco-chewing, Socialism-spouting freshman, he didn't fit in. When he learned of a special entrance exam to the University of California, he dropped out and began cramming 19 hours a day, devouring philosophy, literature, chemistry, math. A week before the test, suffering from "brain fag," he closed the books and went sailing in a small skiff. Then he came home, aced the exam and entered the university. Feeling constrained by the confines of the classroom (his own voracious reading, he felt, had taught him more than anything) and short of funds as always, he lasted only a semester. But while at Berkeley he had found old newspaper articles answering a question that haunted him. The rumor was true—his real parents had never married. Fired, perhaps, by shame, and still more by poverty, he wrote tirelessly, sending stories, essays, even epic poems to publishers who sent them all back. By the summer of 1897, he was hanging around his mother's house, wondering what to do next, when a ship filled with Yukon gold docked in San Francisco. A gilded name—Klondike—soon spread a fever that so easily infects young writers.

As winter loomed over Alaska's Inside Passage, London sat in a canoe with Tlingit Indians. Paddling north out of Juneau, Alaska, he was bound for the head of the Chilkoot Pass. There he joined a stream of ragged men heading over a 30-degree grade into the wilderness. To survive in the Yukon, he had brought nearly a ton of equipment—tents, stoves, food and clothing. He began lugging 150-pound loads up the steep trail. Stripped to his red flannel underwear, he moved uphill a stretch, dropped his gear, went back for more. For every mile of progress, he walked 20, back and forth along the trail littered with dead horses and despairing men.

Few Klondikers ever reached its goldfields, but London topped the pass in a month and descended to Lake Lindermann. There he built a boat from spruce trees. He navigated the *Yukon Belle* through a white-water canyon, then guided other miners' boats through, charging $25 a trip.

When winter gripped the region, he settled into a cabin no bigger than a toolshed. Outside, temperatures dropped to 50 below. Inside, scurvy softened his gums and inflamed his joints until he walked doubled over, yet he continued his education, reading Darwin, Milton, Dante. He once

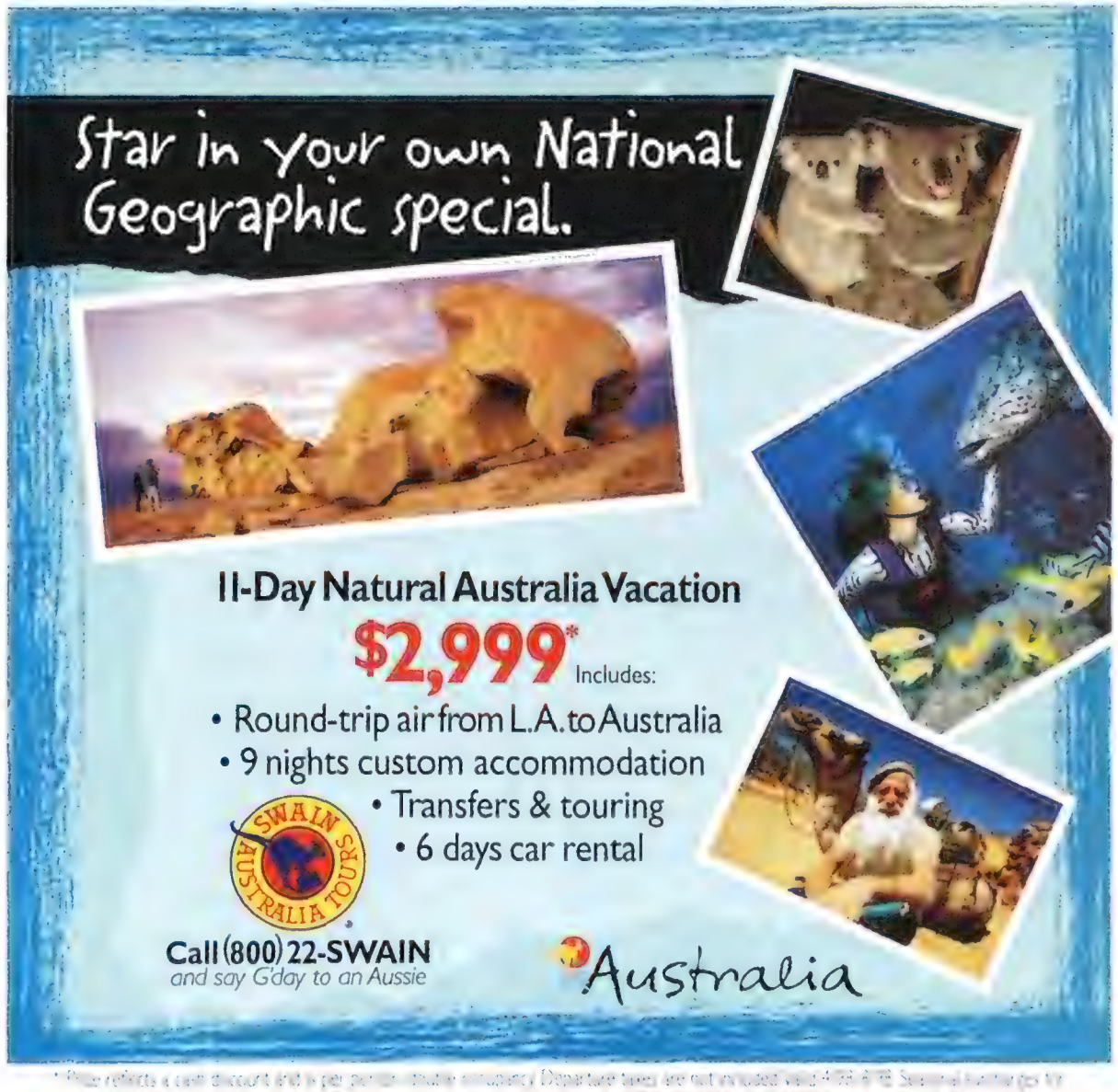
By 1900, London was famed for his short stories: that year, in California, he wed Bess Maddern (left) and basked in his frontiersman's image (above).

hiked several miles to another cabin just to borrow a copy of Kipling.

By spring, he'd had enough. The only gold he'd found had been fool's gold dug from a frozen creek. With his health shot and his dreams deferred, he floated a raft 2,000 miles down the Yukon River, then worked his way back to Oakland.

Like prospectors, authors stake their claims to turf. London later wrote about California and the South Seas, but his heartland was always the Klondike. In an early story, "The White Silence," he sketched its stillness: "All movement ceases, the sky clears, the heavens are as brass; the slightest whisper seems sacrilege, and man becomes timid, affrighted at the sound of his own voice. . . . It is then, if ever, man walks alone with God."

The white silence had given him a voice, but to be heard, he had to thaw the icy terrain of publishing. Again he tore at writing. When his rejection slips, strung on a wire, stretched five feet high, he considered going back to menial labor but remembered his vow. He would be a writer. And as if by will alone, he made himself one. In 1899, his stories began to appear, first in small journals, then in the *Atlantic*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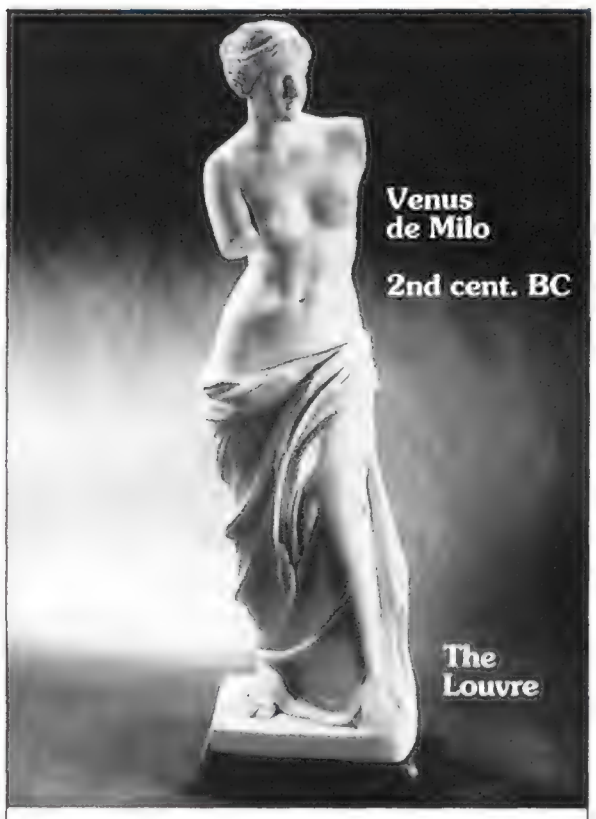

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Monthly. His success, like his work ethic, was a product of the times.

At the turn of this century, London asked questions that bothered the entire nation. Many Americans had left their farms for factories and traded open spaces for swarming cities. Historians had pronounced the frontier closed; Teddy Roosevelt bemoaned the "relaxation of fibre that tends to accompany civilization." Having tamed the wild, had we become deaf to its call? Some people talked of wilderness, but London had been there and brought back the stories. Only 24, he was hailed as the "Kipling of the Klondike." Yet fame, so hard-earned, went to his head like liquor. On the day his first book of stories was published, he began his most reckless journey. He got married.

London divorced his first wife and married Charmian Kittredge in 1905.

He had hoped to tame himself, but marriage only caged him. His wife, Bess, was London's opposite in every respect. A serene socialite, she didn't fall in love with Jack until months after their wedding. Jack could never return the favor. He soon began taking magazine assignments, roaming off to cover the world. Bess sat home, pregnant. (The couple would have two daughters, Joan and Bess.)

But Jack was a hobo again, this time for pay. For six weeks during the summer of 1902, he lived as a beggar in England's slums with the poor, whose lives he wrote about in a work called *The People of the Abyss*. The book's impassioned prose made it his personal favorite. "They picked up stray crumbs of bread the size of peas, apple cores so black and dirty one would not take them to be apple cores, and these things these two men took into their mouths, and chewed them, and swallowed them; and this, between six and seven o'clock in the evening of August 20, year of our Lord 1902, in the heart of the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen."

When not sailing off to some new horizon, London fictionalized his earlier adventures. For his next tale, he recalled a dog he had befriended in the Yukon. Like Jack himself, the dog had been uprooted from California and sent into the wilderness. London planned a short story, but the tale ran away with him. In just five weeks he wrote his masterpiece. *The Call of the Wild*, as every high school English student knows, follows the canine Buck as he turns from lapdog to proud beast. "And when, on the still and cold nights, he pointed his nose at a star and howled long and wolflike, it was his ancestors, dead and dust, pointing nose at star and howling down through the centuries and through him. And his cadences were their cadences, the cadences which voiced their woe and what to them was the meaning of the stillness and the cold, and dark."

The novel was an instant best-seller, critically acclaimed, and made his name a household word. Had he gotten royalties, he could have retired at 27, but he sold all rights for $2,000. The cash bought him a small boat, and sitting on its deck he wrote *The Sea-Wolf*. That work cemented his reputation. And from these two classics came his favorite nickname, "Wolf."

Famous now, but forced to support several relatives, London began rationing his talent. For the rest of his life, he churned out 1,000 words each day. He refused to spare himself. Chain-smoking and binge drinking wore him down. A diet of raw beef "cannibal sandwiches" tore at his digestion. His travels made him a medical manual of maladies, including rotting teeth, malaria, dysentery, rheumatism and kidney stones. Doc-

tors and friends warned him, but London knew his trajectory. "I would rather be ashes than dust," he wrote. "I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time."

In February 1904, in the dead of night, Japanese torpedoes sank Russian battleships at Port Arthur in Manchuria. London was already on his way, covering the Russo-Japanese War for the Hearst papers. Other correspondents reported the war from bars in Tokyo, but London sailed a Chinese junk across the Yellow Sea in subzero weather, living off cold rice and fish. Arriving on the Korean peninsula, he managed to fall in with advancing columns of the Japanese First Army. London never did succeed in getting to the front, although he did record the first skirmish between Russian and Japanese land forces. His descriptions of the great suffering the Japanese troops endured during that bitter winter are succinct and powerful: footsore soldiers, he reported, "trailed along for miles behind every marching company. . . . Each step is torture, and they must go on, step by step, all day long . . . each step hurting anew the lacerated flesh. To them Paradise would sum itself up in cessation of movement."

Eventually, the Japanese, annoyed at his intrusive presence, arrested him. London was returned to the company of his fellow reporters, billeted in Seoul. He returned home with even more celebrity, then set out on a lecture tour across America.

At the podium, the prominent Socialist put on a show. He pounded his fist, denounced businessmen as "parasites" and brought college students to their feet by shouting, "The revolution is here now! Stop it who can!" The press caricatured him as "that Socialist sensation-monger."

But his politics were not as scandalous as his second marriage. As the leading light among Bay Area writers, "Wolf" was the alpha male in a pack of bohemians that met at his home in the Oakland hills. There, to Bess' dismay, Jack and friends wrestled, boxed and debated endlessly. Among London's sparring partners was a woman named Charmian. Five years his senior, lean and athletic, Charmian Kittredge shared Jack's romantic views of life, literature and sheer fun. London no longer heard the call of wedlock: Charmian seemed open to making a quest of their lives.

And so, in November 1905, he divorced Bess and married Charmian the next day. The nation was shocked. Propriety, and even the law in some states, demanded that a divorced man wait a year before remarrying. London's lecture dates were abruptly canceled. Preachers denounced him. Librarians yanked his books from their shelves. Jack shrugged it off and went on dreaming. Now, married to his "Mate-Woman," he dreamt in tandem.

In April 1906, as London rode a ferry into burning San Francisco to report on the devastating earthquake, the latest celebrity gossip filled the papers. That "Socialist sensation-monger" was planning another exploit. He would build a boat and sail around the world, a seven-year voyage

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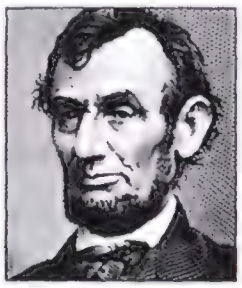
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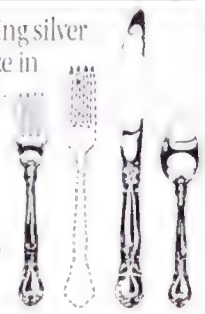
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The 1935 film version of *The Call of the Wild* starred Clark Gable and Loretta Young.

aboard the *Snark*. He was 31, the nation's most popular author, now if ever able to rest on his laurels. But after a year's ordeal building the *Snark*, he sailed proudly through the Golden Gate, an adventurer again.

Jack steered the *Snark* to Hawaii. There, basking in the tropics, he wrote his best Yukon story. "To Build a Fire" describes a Klondiker, numb with cold, struggling to light a single match. "He picked [the match] up in his teeth and scratched it on his leg. Twenty times he scratched before he succeeded in lighting it. As it flamed, he held it with his teeth to the birch-bark. But the burning brimstone went up his nostrils and into his lungs, causing him to cough spasmodically. The match fell into the snow and went out." The masterful tale of frozen death has been translated into more languages than any other American short story.

Leaving Hawaii, the *Snark* sailed into a new playground, the South Seas. Jack often interrupted his morning writing to marvel with Charmian about where they were bound. But many ports of call were not fields of dreams. They were met with arrows on some islands, dodged headhunters on others. Soon, tropical diseases came calling. With the skin peeling off his hands, and suffering from a double fistula, Jack ended up in an Australian hospital. After an odyssey of more than two years, the Londons gave up on the adventure, selling the *Snark* and heading home.

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Nomads make few monuments, but before he died, London left spectacular ruins. On a hillside above the little town of Glen Ellen in the California wine country stands Jack London State Historic Park, the sprawling ranch where London lived his final years.

And down a dirt path stands London's last dream. Wolf House was to be the palace the poor boy never had. Plans called for a study filled with Jack's 15,000 books, an indoor pond, a banquet-size living room, an alcove for Charmian's Steinway grand.

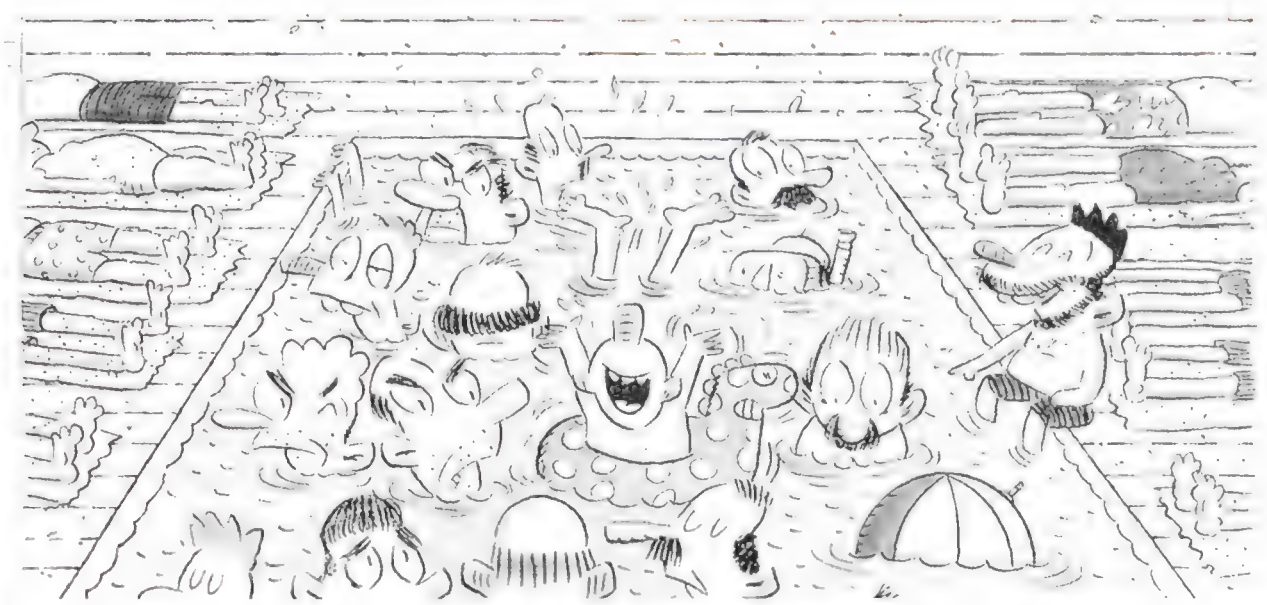
While building it, London labored at his writing. He was America's best-paid author but could not emerge from the debt of his reckless living. He experimented with new topics but earned his living with formulaic stories he dismissed as "all hack."

In 1910, Charmian gave birth to a daughter. The baby lived only two days. The couple fled again, sailing around Cape Horn on one journey and also returning to Hawaii, but the "superb meteor" was falling. His kidneys, damaged by mercury chloride taken in the tropics to cure yaws, were poisoning him. He drank more, and called himself "the ancient."

He channeled his energy into the only dream big enough to contain him. Slowly, the magnificent Wolf House rose in the redwoods. Then on a warm August night in 1913, Jack and Charmian were awakened by shouts. Racing from their beds, they ran toward the grove where Wolf House was being built. By the time they reached Wolf House, it was engulfed in flames.

Arson was suspected, but the cause now seems to have been spontaneous combustion in a pile of cleaning rags. Standing on a ridgetop in the early hours of the morning, London watched Wolf House burn. His face lit by the fire's glow, he wept.

Nearly 80,000 visitors a year come to London's ranch. They walk through the redwoods to the towering ruins of Wolf House. In a home Charmian later built, they see copies of *The Call of the Wild* in Hindi, *The Sea-Wolf* in Latvian, Yukon stories in



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Vietnamese. They visit his grave and the porch where he died. But visitors will never know which ending fits London's story. Did he die like his autobiographical hero, Martin Eden, of his own hand? Or like so many of his Klondike stalwarts, did he face death clinging desperately to life? Even his biographers disagree.

On a November night in 1916, he awoke in excruciating pain. He stumbled around the house, tried to sleep. Then, unable to stand the agony in his kidneys, he injected himself with morphine he had on hand for pain relief. He was found the next morning in a coma and died that evening. For many years, London's suicide was taken as fact, but modern scholars now doubt that he took his life.

"There is no evidence to support suicide," said Earle Labor, a professor of English at Centenary College in Louisiana and editor of *The Portable Jack London*. "People like to think sensational things about writers, and Jack was a sensational guy. We've been trying for years to set the record straight." An accidental overdose could have killed London. But Labor disputes this—recent evidence suggests the writer may have died from complications associated with lupus and, finally, a stroke. On his last evening, he had written to his daughter Joan, asking her to sail with him the following Sunday.

He had so many other plans for his ranch, his writing, more travels. Further doubt is cast by a film clip of London shown in the park's museum. Romping around his ranch just a week before his death, he looks anything but the dour, suicidal drunk some portray him in his final days. Stouter but still boyish, he looks ready for the road again.

London's sudden death stunned readers, but critics felt his muse had died years before. Many saw him as a talented writer who "wrote far more than will be good for his future reputation." He remained enormously popular overseas, but in America

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only his early novels were revered. Critics seemed to take special pleasure in blasting him as a ham-handed author of dog stories.

"Critics have never taken fondly to Jack, nor he to them," says Labor, who is writing a biography of London. "But since the mid-1960s, they've taken another look. His letters were published, the *Jack London Newsletter* drew new fans, his complete stories came out in 1993 and there's been a real upsurge of interest in him." London's new fans praise not just his adventure stories but his pioneering memoirs on hoboing and alcoholism and his fiction about everything from astral projection to leprosy.

Today, London's fame is as wide as his wanderings. Last month, more than 150 devotees gathered at the annual Jack London birthday bash held in the California wine country. "Interest is growing around the world," says Winnie Kingman, owner of the Jack London Bookstore in nearby Glen Ellen. Jack London Societies now meet in Texas, Japan, the Klondike, wherever dreamers seek company. How few of London's books are American classics is a moot point: he himself was an American classic.

And so long as adventurers find themselves deskbound or housebound, his life will inspire them. Even now I recall meeting such a man in San Francisco, a friend of a friend. Dreaming of setting out around the world, he had joined the merchant marine, then quit when he learned that modern sailing requires more math than mettle. While our friends talked, we sat and said little. Finally I summoned the nerve. "Why the merchant marine?" I asked. "Did you have some Jack London fantasy?" A big grin broke out on his face and we began to discuss the books, the adventures and what we would have given to follow Jack London's call.

Bruce Watson has written for SMITHSONIAN *on a number of literary figures, including O. Henry and Ambrose Bierce.*

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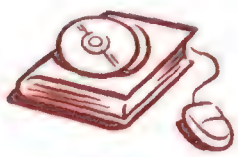

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THE LAST PAGE

Reflections on Fame

BY GERALD DUMAS

I HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED FOLLOWing in the footsteps of the famous. I've been inside Mark Twain's house in Hartford, here in Connecticut, eight times. As a tribute to the valiant spirit of Winston Churchill, I drank a brandy and smoked a cigar on the side lawn at Chartwell, his country home in Kent. James Thurber's widow, Helen, allowed me to sit at his desk and draw a picture of a fierce bunny. And I once found myself in Goethe's mansion, trying not to think of critic Guy Davenport's remark, "Sometimes when reading Goethe I have the paralyzing suspicion that he is trying to be funny."

Not long ago, I stood in the doorway of composer Jean Sibelius' bedroom in his house on a hill in the country around Helsinki. A velvet rope was strung across the doorway, but I could have reached over the rope and touched the foot of the narrow bed. In fact, I did reach over the rope and touch the bed. To the right of the door hung one of his famous white suits. I touched the suit, too.

"This is exciting," I said to my wife, Gail. "I just love conducting Sibelius. The third and fourth movements of the *Second Symphony*, for instance. I think some of those passages are as emotionally satisfying as any that have ever been written."

There were only a few other tourists, but one couple leaned closer to listen to me. There were no guides and I was the only one who was talking. "I used to conduct while listening to the phonograph in my bedroom in Detroit," I informed them. "With a white baton my brother Carl got from Sammy Kaye." They glanced at each other and quickly moved away. Maybe they didn't speak English.

There was a desk close to Sibelius' bed.

"See that?" I said. "He probably worked in bed, just like Mark Twain and Churchill. Now you won't mind seeing me in bed when you go off to work every day."

"But you're not doing anything," Gail said. "You're looking at baseball scores and reading *TV Guide*. Anyway, Mark Twain should have been downstairs with his family at breakfast."

One night several years ago, I was still awake at 2 A.M., drinking beer and reading Twain's autobiography, when I came to a page that said, "Last night I was still up at 2 A.M., drinking beer and reading Dumas." I was so charmed that I had to wake Gail up to tell her, and she's had it in for Mark Twain ever since.

We admired Sibelius' piano, which was given to him by friends on his 50th birthday. People considered him a national treasure. He was a romantic who wrote mystical tone poems about his native land. Accordingly, they felt he ought to be protected, cared for, comforted, a sentiment with which he totally agreed.

As we left, our Finnish host told us a story that nicely illustrated this point. Sibelius sometimes spent the day in Helsinki, where he would be wined and dined. Someone would drive him home, but if it was winter and had snowed, the car could not get up the steep driveway. So his wife and daughters would wait patiently for him at the foot of the driveway with a wheelbarrow. Sibelius would be helped out of the car and into the wheelbarrow, and his wife and daughters would then push him up to the house.

I have been inside Mark Twain's house in Hartford eight times.

I like that story because it puts an ordinary husband's mild desires and rather meager requirements into proper perspective. The great Sibelius makes the rest of us guys look like undemanding pussycats.

On the way back to Helsinki I thought of my own long driveway at home in Connecticut and asked Gail if we still had our old wheelbarrow. She pretended not to hear me.

This is where we come in

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